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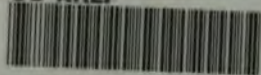
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THE
YOUTH AND MANHOOD
OF
CYRIL THORNTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH ;
AND T. CADELL, LONDON.
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THE
YOUTH AND MANHOOD
OF
CYRIL THORNTON.

CHAPTER I.

Take heed you steer your vessel right, my son :
This calm of heaven, this mermaid's melody,
Into an unseen whirlpool draws you fast,
And in a moment sinks you.

DRYDEN.

ON the following morning, Lucy and myself bade farewell to our excellent and kind friends, and set out for Staunton Court. There were wet eyes at our departure, and young and bright countenances were darkened with sorrow; yet there was no tear on the cheek of Laura Willoughby, no outward sign of inward

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agitation, when the words of parting kindness were exchanged between us. Her countenance was calm and unmoved as that of a statue, and but for one long and convulsive heave of her bosom, as she quickly turned from me to cast herself into the arms of Lucy, her figure, too, might at that moment, have been taken, for one wrought into the semblance of life, by the Promethean art of the sculptor. Then, however, and not till then, came the burst of grief; and never, I believe, were purer tears shed from angel-eyes, than bedimmed the cheeks of these innocent and lovely girls.

But, painful as it is, the moment of parting comes at last. The weeping Lucy was assisted to the carriage by Frank Willoughby and myself; and, after one kind pressure of the hand, and one kind look, poor Lucy's effort was over, and we were rapidly moving onward, to our destination.

For the first mile or two, she leant her head upon my shoulder, and was sorrowful and silent. But the change of scene and object, which every minute was presenting to her view, and the excitement of rapid locomotion to one little accustomed to travelling, wrought their usual

effect, and, before the conclusion of the first stage, all traces of grief had been obliterated from her countenance.

There is a pleasure in travelling with a young and happy creature, smiling in the exuberance of her own innocent delight—to whom all that she beholds, comes clad in the charm of novelty. Lucy had a thousand questions to ask, and I to answer; and when at length fatigued by her long-continued task of observation, she warbled for me a sweet and lively song, often stopping suddenly, with a note half modulated on her lips, when any new object appeared to excite her curiosity, or interest.

We slept that night on the road, and the next day found us rapidly approaching the termination of our journey. It was about three o'clock when we drove through the splendid gateway into the large outer park, which stretched for miles on every side of the mansion. During the latter part of the journey, a change had come over the spirits of Lucy. External objects had no longer their former power, in swaying the mood of her mind. All her anxiety and inquiries, were now connected with the Lady Melicent; and the impression which she, a sim-

ple and inexperienced girl, could expect to make on one, so imposingly arrayed in all beauty and accomplishment. Poor Lucy knew not the charm she bore about her, in her own fair countenance, and guileless heart. I endeavoured to calm her fears, by all the assurances in my power, but her spirit was damped by apprehension of the new scene on which she was about to enter,—of mingling for the first time with strangers, to all of whom she was unknown, and by all of whom, of course, unloved. As we approached the house her anxiety increased; and in crossing the bridge, through the superb portal which I have already described, she clasped her arm in mine, as if clinging to me for support and protection, and her breathing was hurried and irregular.

We descended from the carriage, and were ushered into the library. We found there the Lady Melicent, and a very starched and dignified old lady, who was introduced to us, as her aunt, Lady Greystoke. The dowager rose from her chair as stiff as a poker, and scrutinizing poor Lucy with her keen spectacled eyes, dropped such a courtesy, as might be in vogue in the

reign of Queen Anne, and resumed her work. I felt gratified by Lady Melicent's reception of Lucy. She seemed charmed by her appearance; and seating herself beside her on the sofa, spoke to her a thousand kind things, which were aided in their effect, by looks, if possible, yet kinder. The task of making Lucy happy, was never a very difficult one; and before half an hour had elapsed, all the fears which her imagination had conjured up, had vanished into thin air.

It was natural, that at first Lucy should be the principal object of Lady Melicent's attentions, and I was therefore not mortified, as in other circumstances I probably should, at finding myself thrown into the back ground. If it was impossible to extract any thing flattering to my self-love from the mode of my reception; there was, on the other hand, nothing in it, which could be mortifying to my vanity. Nothing indeed, but the height of coxcombry could have led me to expect, if I really did expect, to have perceived in the Lady Melicent any demonstration of peculiar pleasure on our meeting. Yet mine was an imagination, which, when fairly at

work, was generally unshackled, either by reason or probability, and delighted in constructing, from visionary contingencies, gorgeous fabrics of future happiness, which, like the enchanted castles of old, a single breath sufficed, to dissipate and dissolve.

The conversation, which had become general was, however, soon diverted from the channel it had sought, by the entrance of Lord Amersham, accompanied by Sir Charles Greystoke, and Sir Cavendish Potts. His Lordship entered the library in his usual extraordinary pace, and running, if so it can be called, up to Lucy, seized both her hands in his, and saluted her cheek, before she was aware of his intention. The blood, for a moment, mounted into her face; but, when she had time to contemplate the figure of Lord Amersham, and listen to the compliments, which he pronounced in a voice, and with a volubility peculiar to himself, the suffusion gave place to a smile.

“ Welcome, most welcome to Staunton Court, my dear young lady; and you too, Thornton, how d’ye do? glad to see you. Nay, don’t blush, Miss Thornton, I’m an old man, you

know, and a relation, and entitled on both grounds to a salute. Hope you've not suffered from your journey?—Pleasant weather, but bad roads. Your sister—Mrs Hewson, I think—pardon me if I mistake the name—shocking memory for names—quite well, I hope, when you last heard? Well, Thornton, when are you going to be a Colonel, ey? Dont let 'em rest at the Horse-Guards, you know—that's the secret; out of sight out of mind's, the rule there. Nothing like a monthly memorial, and a visit to the levee. Sir Charles can tell you that—ey, Sir Charles?—old services apt to be forgot—a freshener of the memory always good in such cases—By the by, Sir Charles, let me introduce my young friends to you. Sir Charles Greystoke Miss Thornton; Captain Thornton of the —— ey, am I right—that your regiment? Ah! I see Sir Cavendish and you are old friends, so I needn't go through the form with him. Sir Cavendish knows all the world, and, of course, you too."

Lord Amersham was right. Sir Cavendish Potts was one of those people who never drop an acquaintance, nor forget a single person whom; in a very extended and promiscuous in-

tercourse with the world, they ever chance to meet. To drink a glass of wine with Sir Cavendish, or sit next him at dinner, was to establish an acquaintance for life, for never after, would he pass you even in the street, without a bow of recognition.

On the present occasion he had accosted me as an old friend, though we had never met since I had last seen him at Staunton. Immediately on entering the apartment, he advanced towards me, retaining his eye-glass in its position, by the compression of his eyebrow, and exclaiming—

“ Ah ! my old and excellent friend Thornton, I declare ; I trust I have the pleasure of meeting you in perfect health ? I am delighted once more to have the honour of taking you by the hand. I scarcely dared, from hearing you were abroad, to anticipate the pleasure of so soon again enjoying your agreeable society ; and it is now with sincere pleasure, I venture to congratulate you, on your return to your native land, crowned with laurels and distinction.”

Though Lady Greystoke has been already mentioned, as being in the library with Lady Melicent, on our arrival, I have thought it

better, to defer introducing her more particularly to the notice of the reader, till the appearance of Sir Charles, in order that those, whom holy church had joined, should not be separated even in description. Lady Greystoke was uterine sister to Lord Amersham, by a former marriage, and was several years older than his Lordship. The illness of Lady Amersham, who was now unable to quit her chamber, and whose recovery was hopeless, had rendered it desirable, that a person of some standing and consideration in the world, should, by her presence, relieve Lady Melicent from that awkwardness of situation, which is sometimes apt to arise, in an establishment ungraced by the presence of a matron.

For this purpose, the person to whom Lord Amersham's eye naturally turned, was Lady Greystoke. She was indeed the very mirror of decorum; and the fact of her countenancing any person or establishment, was considered by the world, as sufficient evidence of its perfect propriety, in the very widest and strictest acceptance of the term. Lady Greystoke was, indeed, one of those persons, the lustre of whose repu-

tation, the breath of scandal had never dared to dim. Rigid and censorious in her judgment of others, and a perfect precisian in all observances of external decorum, she realized the *beau ideal* of a Duenna, and was at once shrewd, sharp, and unbending in exacting a scrupulous conformity to her opinions from all within the range of her influence.

Modern fashions, and modern innovations in manners, were her aversion. In dress she was at least half a century behind her age, and delighted in that style of antique and picturesque adornment, now considered only as historically curious. Her grey hair was drawn up straight from her forehead, beneath which, peered two keen grey eyes, the expression of which was in perfect accordance, with the sharpness of her other features.

Sir Charles Greystoke was exactly the sort of person, one would, *a priori*, imagine, to have selected such a woman for his wife. Sir Charles was a military man of the old school, who had been employed in several important commands, as a general officer, and had been rewarded for his conduct in them, by the insignia of the

Bath. There was something professional in his dress and air, which betrayed him at once to be an old soldier. He wore a blue surtout, with the button of a Lieutenant-General; high military boots, which were cut square at top, and reached in front above the cap of the knee; and his hair, which was highly powdered, was collected behind into a club, to which the motion of his head generally communicated a sort of vibratory swing across his shoulders, not unlike that of the pendulum of a clock.

The hour of dinner found the party all assembled in the drawing-room. Lord Amersham was spruce as usual, and adorned with the never-failing Star of the Bath. His brother knight, though renovated likewise, by the cares of the toilet, was not similarly decorated. Holding the post of equerry to the King, he wore what is called the Windsor uniform, and the cut of his coat, the tails of which, when buttoned, nearly met in front like a petticoat, was of a fashion apparently contemporaneous with the dress of his better half. That, indeed, was sufficiently remarkable in these days of degenerate taste, to draw the attention of every eye, which custom

had not rendered familiar with the appearance of Lady Greystoke. Her gown was of the old Florentine silk, the pattern of which displayed flowers of all sizes and colours. The sleeves, which were of an enormous size, terminated at the elbow, and were decorated with broad lace, the inferior part of the arm, being covered with gloves of white silk. The waist was of unusual length and slimness, and at the lower extremity, the skirt or petticoat bulged suddenly out in a rotundity and fullness of drapery, indicating to an unpractised eye, a plenitude of that inexpressible part of the person, altogether disproportioned to what above was more visible, and better defined. Her head-dress was something in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and from the summit, lappets of Brussels point hung down behind. On her bony hands she wore rings of an enormous size, and the handkerchief which covered her neck, and reached almost to her chin, was decorously pinned in front by a large diamond brooch, corresponding with the antique brilliant ear-rings which sparkled above.

When Lord Amersham approached to hand her to the dining-room, nothing could exceed

the formality and stateliness of the whole proceeding. She tendered his lordship the tip of her gloved fingers, (for taking a gentleman's arm she held to be altogether a modern innovation,) and slowly led the way from the apartment, in all the grace and dignity of rustling silk, and high-heeled shoes.

The dinner passed—to me heavily enough, for I was *not* near the Lady Melicent, and *was* near Lady Greystoke. Of course, I was courtier enough, to give her no reason to complain, of any want of assiduity in my attentions. Her observations, which at first, to say the truth, were cold and haughty enough, were by me received as oracles, and before the second course was removed, I had drank Champagne with her, and evidently had gained some footing, in her good graces.

“Your sister, Captain Thornton,” said the Dowager, in the civil and benignant mood into which my attentions had brought her,—“your sister, Captain Thornton,” glancing at the same time, with her sharp grey eyes at Lucy, who was seated on the opposite side of the table, between Sir Charles Greystoke and Lord Amersham,

(what a situation for poor Lucy!) “seems a very good, and a very pretty girl. I have been talking to her in the drawing-room, and find her to be very well informed, and really better educated than common.”

I, of course, bowed, and expressed my delight that Lucy should have obtained the good opinion of so accomplished a judge of female excellence, as Lady Greystoke. The old lady wreathed her lips into what was intended for a smile, and proceeded :—

“Your sister told me, I think, she had been educated at home. Indeed, I should have known as much, without being told it, for public schools are sad things, Captain Thornton. I never would have allowed any daughter of mine, to be educated at a public school. Of the immorality acquired at these public schools, you can form no idea; besides, the girls are always pert, forward, ill-educated, and ill-bred.”

I answered, that although she was right in supposing that the immorality taught in public seminaries for young ladies, had not fallen within the immediate scope of my own experience and observation, my conviction must naturally

follow any statement of opinion, from one so eminently qualified, to decide on such a subject as her Ladyship.

“ Now, I’ll give you an instance, Captain Thornton, in which it would have been fortunate, if my advice had been followed. Perhaps you know Tottenham—Colonel Tottenham, of the——Ah! no matter; he was aide-de-camp to Sir Charles, when he commanded the Brighton district, and fell in love with some silly girl with a pretty face, whom he met with at a ball. One morning Captain Tottenham, for he was then only Captain, came to me, and said, ‘ My Lady Greystoke, I wish for the honour of your ladyship’s advice on a point that concerns me very nearly.’—‘ You know, Captain Tottenham,’ I replied, ‘ that my advice is always at the service of my friends.’ Well, I soon found out he wished for my advice about his marriage. ‘ But how can I advise you, Captain Tottenham,’ said I, ‘ till I know something of the lady.’ ‘ Oh,’ replied he, ‘ she is a very nice, elegant, accomplished, and pretty girl, of a respectable family, and only lately returned from a finishing-school at Bath.’ ‘ Hold, Captain Tottenham,’ I interrupt-

ed, 'not a word more. What, marry a girl from a finishing-school ! Yes ; I'll warrant she's finished enough ; young ladies are generally tolerably well finished before they quit such seminaries. Are you mad,' said I, 'to think of marrying such a girl ? Have nothing to say to her. Give up the connexion instantly, or if you don't, take my word for it, you'll repent it all the days of your life.' Well, Captain Thornton, in spite of all he married her, and mark the sequel. In less than two years she eloped with Major Farebrother, of the Shropshire militia, whom Tottenham shot afterwards in a duel."

I soon found, Lady Greystoke's character was not a very difficult one to fathom. She, in truth, was one of those people, kind and friendly enough at bottom, who insist on managing everybody and everything. Submit yourself to the guidance of such a person, and she will do everything in her power to promote your interest. Dispute her authority, or neglect her advice, and the kind friend becomes at once a determined enemy.

On the departure of the ladies, the conversation would have been stupid enough, but

for Sir Cavendish Potts, who, though rather inordinately loquacious, was furnished with such a store of anecdote, as to render him, occasionally, an amusing companion. The authenticity of most of these might, perhaps, be disputed, but if not *vrais*, were at least *vraisemblables*, and that, for all common purposes, is enough.

Lord Amersham introduced farming, and began an explanatory dissertation of his own recent improvements in the art agricultural. This, I found, was coldly received by his auditors, who had probably been too often caught by the same bait, to nibble at it very freely again.

Farming being discarded, then came the war in Spain and Viscount Wellington. At first, I was not without hope of profiting by the military knowledge and experience, of the two Generals, and listened to their observations in a spirit of respectful attention. But the old fable of the Mountain and the Mouse, could not have been more fully illustrated. To me, who, from personal observation, knew something of the facts and circumstances of the war, nothing could appear more puerile and jejune than their

remarks, and the plausible *sottises* of Sir Charles Greystoke, were, in reality, little better, than the more violent absurdities of Lord Amersham. I discovered, indeed, that both of these veterans, but especially Sir Charles, in common, I believe, with most officers similarly situated, felt not a little jealousy of their younger rivals, whom the circumstances of the Peninsular war, had suddenly called forward into action and distinction. They felt that their own fame had diminished, in comparison with that of officers, of standing far junior to themselves. The Generals, whose greatest achievement consisted in the capture of a fort, or the defence of a sugar island, could not but perceive, that they were no longer looked up to, as the heroes of their age. Those whose fame, a few years ago, had been second to none, were now become second to many, with the imminent prospect, from the occurrences which were taking place around them, of sinking still lower in the scale.

In such circumstances, a little bitterness of feeling is perhaps pardonable, and the merit which a man cannot see without pain, he may be excused for shutting his eyes, and refusing

to see at all. Sir Charles gravely maintained the impossibility of permanently supporting an army, in the interior of Spain, from the impossibility of procuring supplies, and both he and Lord Amersham joined in considering the retreat of Lord Wellington, after the battle of Talavera, to be a proof of utter and hopeless failure. The opinions of these distinguished officers were not singular, and probably not original. They were in strict accordance with the sentiments of a very large portion of the British nation, by whom Lord Wellington was at that period regarded with jealousy and distrust; nor were they finally relinquished, until he had succeeded in crowning the British arms with a series of victories, unsurpassed in our annals, and his fame had become, alike beyond the reach of envy or detraction.

In the drawing room, I enjoyed no opportunity of particular conversation, with Lady Mellicent, nor did I seek for such. I saw her, I heard her, and this in itself was happiness. Perhaps she was to me more attractive, that she now resembled more what I remembered her to have been, on my first visit to Staunton.

Her spirits were certainly better, than when I had seen her in Bath ; her step was more elastic, and her manner more airy. Lovely she was, indeed, in all her phases, but to me most delightful in this, in which she had at first impressed my young imagination.

A week flew past at Staunton, and found the same party still assembled within its walls. Once a day, Lady Melicent generally walked with Lucy in the Park, or drove her in a pony carriage. On these occasions, sometimes alone, sometimes with Sir Cavendish, I formed their escort. Often, when tired by the length of her walk, Lady Melicent would lean on my arm for support. At first, by the very privacy which this afforded, I felt embarrassed. That to which my wishes were most eagerly directed, when obtained, brought with it no enjoyment. But by degrees this wore off. There was nothing of reserve about Lady Melicent ; her manner was ever free and unconstrained ; and open in the expression of her sentiments, she was vehement alike in her partiality and aversion. Thus were the artificial barriers to our intimacy broken down, and now for the first time did hope dawn

on my spirit, and whisper of high destiny, and successful love. The seeds of passion, which had hitherto lain dormant in my bosom, by degrees burst out into life and vigour. Its roots became gradually twisted with every fibre of my heart, and I felt and knew, that the tree to which my life-blood lent its nourishment, could not wither, till that heart had perished. I was a being no longer under the sway of reason. In all that concerned my love, or its object, my judgment had no share. I acted under a vehement and commanding impulse, which it was alike impossible to oppose or to restrain.

CHAPTER II.

The house which ~~was~~ my father's, is mine own ;
I am the lord of all this fair demesne.

Montalto, a Tragedy.

FROM the period of her marriage, both Lucy and myself, had received occasional letters from Jane. Those written immediately after that event, were not couched in the established phraseology, which new-married ladies generally employ, to convey their first blissful experience of the wedded state. She did not profess herself the happiest of women, nor bless Providence in the exuberance of her gratitude, for having given her an angel for a husband. This I did not expect. She had given her hand to one who I was well aware could never touch her heart. But I was not without hopes, that, unpromising as the character of Hewson certainly was, he might be led, in a great degree, to relinquish his former habits, by the allurements of

domestic pleasures, to which he had till now been a stranger. Jane's fortune, though considerable, was not such, as to hold out any strong inducement to a man like Hewson. Love alone, I imagined, could have led him to seek an union with one, whom it appeared to me, so natural to love; and little pleasure, as I could promise myself in his society, I deemed it right, for Jane's sake, to cultivate the acquaintance, and, if possible, to secure the friendship, of a person with whom, I had become so closely connected.

On our arrival at Staunton, I had therefore written to Jane, offering a visit from both Lucy and myself, which had been joyfully accepted. I felt it would be unkind to quit England, without seeing her. It would seem, as if her own family declined affording her either countenance or protection, and left her to depend solely, on the kindness of those, among whom she might be cast, when, by the disseverment of all former ties, she was but as a waif amid the troubled waters of the world.

When we reached Feltham, for so Hewson's place was called, we found Jane there alone. Hewson had gone to Newmarket, and was not

expected for some days. I was not displeased at this.

It gave us an opportunity of enjoying that confidential intercourse with Jane, to which Hewson's presence must have been a bar. The meeting was, as might be expected, an affecting one. Since we had last met, our only surviving parent had been laid in the grave; and in the situation of us all, great changes had taken place. I endeavoured to support Jane's spirits, which I saw were strongly agitated, by rendering the meeting, as little as possible, the vehicle of painful remembrance, and smilingly congratulated her on her recent change of condition. Jane too smiled, but her smile was a faint one, and certainly not a smile of gladness. My presence, indeed, had but little share in exciting the deep emotion, which the meeting had evidently caused her. The two sisters clasped each other in a long embrace, and wept bitterly. From infancy to womanhood, never had they been separated for a single hour.

*" They with their needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key :*

As if their hands, their sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So they grew together,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem ;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart.

But the vows which Jane had breathed at the altar, had been to them the fiat of separation, and then, they first had been divided. They spoke not—they could not speak ; but well did I know, at that moment, that their hearts were full, even to bursting, with the memory of *Home*.

What an infinity of mournful recollections had not that single word the power to conjure up within them ! They thought at that moment of all their childish happiness and love—of love unbroken—of happiness, perhaps no longer so. Even to those, whose days have been unclouded by sorrow, the memory of past delight brings with it a pang. But, happy as their days of youth and innocence had been, they had not been unmarked by storm and darkness. Their joys had been the same, and the same clouds had overcast them.

There exists between sisters a confidence too sacred, even for the ear of a brother to partake. Nature herself, has placed a barrier in the diffe-

rence of sex, to that perfect sympathy and communion of feeling, that guileless out-pouring of the heart, which knits still closer the ties of blood, and alike alleviates the sorrows, and heightens the enjoyment, of young and innocent sisters. It was natural, that in such a meeting I should form but a secondary object. They embraced, they wept in each other's arms, but sunshine came again, for in their tears there was comfort.

Perfect confidence, even between sisters, can exist only before marriage. Thus far can it go, but no farther. Different feelings, and separate objects of interest, then inevitably spring up, and the ties by which female hearts till then had been bound together, are either loosened or snap in twain. The love may still remain, but the confidence is gone.

Thus I found it was with Jane. When I questioned her on the situation in which she was now placed, and, pressing her hand in mine, inquired if she was happy, she answered evasively, and was evidently anxious, to turn the conversation into another channel.

“Do not, my dear brother,” she at length

said, "believe me to be unhappy, till I complain of being so. Do you not see me surrounded by all the comforts and elegancies, which wealth can bestow? and if——" She paused for an instant, for a sigh mounted to her lips, and struggled for utterance. "And if—there are some drawbacks to my happiness, these can, and ought to be known only, to God and myself, and must be borne unrepiningly, and in silence."

I forbore, therefore, any further entreaties, on a point to which allusion was evidently painful.

Jane, since I saw her last, had not in appearance, undergone any remarkable change. Her figure was thin and graceful, as it had been in the days of her maidenhood. Her countenance bore the same sweetness of expression, but its vivacity had been dulled, by an acquaintance with the new cares and duties, of a married life. The cheek was paler, and the eye more dim, than my memory told me, they had been of yore. I regarded these external demonstrations with interest, for it was in a great measure from these alone, that I could draw any conclusion with regard to the effect

which her union with Hewson, had produced on her happiness.

In speaking of her husband, she used neither the language of complaint nor reproach. I read the delicacy of her feelings, and felt their propriety. Whatever Hewson might be, she was now his wife ; and she was resolved to shrink from no duties, whether of action or sufferance, which that relation imposed on her. His failings, whatever grief they might have caused her, were things, of which it was painful to think, and impossible to speak ; and of whatever sorrows, her union might have been the fatal cause, they were treasured in the secrecy and silence, of her own heart.

While I was still at Feltham, and before Hewson returned from Newmarket, a letter reached me, which had been forwarded from Staunton, having arrived there the day after my departure. It was from Mrs Thornton, informing me of the death of her son, and stating her willingness, now that her own interests alone were concerned, to enter into a reasonable compromise, in order to avoid the unpleasant family disclosures, to which the legal prosecu-

tion of my claims could not fail to give rise. She invited me, therefore, to grant her an immediate interview at Thornhill, by which the preliminaries of our agreement might be arranged, and the lawsuit brought at once, to an amicable termination.

Nothing could possibly be more consonant to my own wishes, than such an arrangement. I was willing to give up much, in order to avoid the humiliation, of a public disclosure of a father's weakness and prejudice. The idea that the sanity of my father's mind, should become the subject of investigation in a court of law; that the privacy of his domestic life should be exposed to the public gaze, become the subject of newspaper comment, and furnish matter of amusement, to every coffeehouse in London, was to me inexpressibly painful. With the most perfect conviction of having both law and justice on my side, I felt this, and felt it strongly; and to escape from such an alternative, there was scarcely any demand, short of the entire alienation of the hereditary estate of my family, with which I was not fully prepared to comply. I determined, therefore, to lose no

time in seeking the proposed meeting ; and having already spent a day or two with Jane, I left Lucy with her till my return, and on the following morning set off for Thornhill.

There was nothing remarkable in my journey, and on my arrival, I was instantly ushered into the presence of Mrs Thornton. She was alone, and apparently, or (why should I question the sincerity of a mother's sorrow for the loss of her only child ?) really absorbed in deep and violent grief. I offered her such condolence, as it was natural for one, peculiarly circumstanced as I was, to feel and express—neither suffering the expression of my sympathy to exceed the modesty of nature, nor to sink below, what one, in any case, may be expected to feel, for the bereavement of a mother. My little brother, I learned, had always been an unpromising and sickly child ; and at last had fallen a victim to one of those fevers, to which children are peculiarly liable.

The conversation, which had begun in this melancholy strain, however, gradually converged to the point, which constituted the more immediate object of the interview. I stated, that I now waited upon her, in compliance with the

desire expressed in her letter ; that I was fully prepared to enter into any reasonable terms for an accommodation, which would obviate the unpleasant necessity, of determining the extent of my rights, in a court of law. In case she wished it, I was ready to submit to her, the opinions of the very eminent counsel, by which I had been guided, in the legal steps I had taken. By these, she would at least be convinced, that in uniting in her wish, for an amicable adjustment, I was prompted, not by any fears of the issue, but by those motives of delicacy, and proper feeling alone, for which I was prepared to give her full credit in making the proposal.

It boots not, however, that the reader should be troubled with the details of a negotiation, of which it is sufficient that he be made acquainted with the issue. Waving, therefore, all minor details, be it known, that our approaches having been mutually made, in a style that would have done credit to the most experienced diplomatists, I requested my worthy stepmother to name her terms. These were, first, that the jointure of five hundred pounds a-year, settled

on her by the contract of marriage, should be doubled. Secondly, that all the furniture which had been purchased for Thornhill, since her marriage with my father, should be assigned over to her. Thirdly, that out of the personal estate, she should be paid the sum of two thousand pounds, to defray the expenses attendant on change of residence, and fitting up a new establishment. To these conditions I instantly acceded, and in the presence of old Humphreys the steward, and of an attorney, whom the providence of Mrs Thornton had caused to be in attendance, the proper missives were instantly written and exchanged, and directions given, for the preparation of the deed of settlement.

The joy of Humphreys, at finding the natural heir of Thornhill, thus undisputedly in possession of his natural rights, was the most affecting incident of the scene. Tears filled the eyes of the old man as he pressed me to his bosom, and uttered broken ejaculations of thanksgiving to God. My own heart, too, was full, as I cordially returned his embrace, and heard myself hailed as the lord of that inheritance, to which I had never expected to succeed.

The objects of the meeting being thus accomplished, I bade adieu to Mrs Thornton, and accompanied Humphreys to his house, where I intended to remain for the night. I had much information to receive, and many arrangements to make, with regard to my newly-acquired property, and I was anxious to devote every possible moment of my necessarily short stay, to receiving the one, and communicating my wishes on the other.

The house, in which the aged steward had dwelt for nearly half a century, was situated at the extremity of the Park. We walked at a slow pace, for the limbs of my companion were stiff and feeble, and he leant heavily on his staff. With difficulty I prevailed on him to accept the additional support of my arm, and we advanced in silence, for I was too much occupied in reflection to speak.

I looked around me on the rich landscape that spread on every side,—the noble oaks, beneath whose shadow we passed, and in whose topmost branches, the rook had fixed its airy dwelling,—the hill, the woods, and the fair valley watered by the Severn,—and a thrill of pride

passed through my heart, as I thought—Of all this, I am now the master. The pride, however, soon gave place to feelings of a different character. I remembered it was to the hand of death that I was indebted for the inheritance. These oaks, which my progenitors had planted, had seen many generations pass away around them,—had beheld their progress from infancy to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to decrepitude and death. They were gone, and the face of nature had remained unchanged. The spring came again, the trees had blossomed, and the birds carolled from their branches, the summer had been gay with flowers, and the merry song of the reapers had been heard in autumn, even while the worms were yet busy with his body, who had called these things *his own*. The eyes that wept for the possessors of this fair demesne, as they successively dropped into the grave, were long since closed for ever; the hearts that loved them were undistinguishable from a clod of common earth, and were cold and senseless as that.

I, too, had seen a generation pass away; had laid my parents in the dust; and what was I but

an insignificant link between the future and the past in the great chain of creation ; a creature doomed like them, to live, die, and be forgotten.

This train of reflection, more melancholy perhaps than may appear suited to the occasion, was interrupted by our arrival at the domicile of old Humphreys. He was a widower. My father had procured his only son an appointment in India, where he then was, and a maiden sister, nearly as old as himself, officiated as mistress of his establishment.

Though my appearance as a guest could not have been anticipated by either of these worthy people, yet I was not troubled with any verbose apologies for the plainness of their fare.

“ Had we been apprized of the honour you have been kind enough to confer on us,” said the lady, as we seated ourselves to such a substantial repast as is generally seen on the board of the wealthier class of English yeomen, “ we should have been better provided.”

To say this much, was perhaps due to the pride of her character as a housewife ; but on my assuring her I was an old campaigner, and

accustomed to fare a thousand times worse than that I saw before me, I was not annoyed by any farther prosecution of the subject.

After dinner, Humphreys and myself were left alone, and over a bottle of admirable port, which with his own hands he brought from the cellar, we proceeded to business. Humphreys explained to me very clearly the state of the property. There were no mortgages, and the rent-roll amounted to about L.2700 a-year. So that after paying my stepmother her stipulated allowance of L.1000 a-year, there would still remain a surplus, adequate, and more than adequate, to all my wants. He then informed me of several minor arrangements, which he thought would be conducive to my interest, and which I gave him full authority to carry into effect; and, aware that my profession would again soon render my presence necessary abroad, I committed the estate to his management during my absence. I directed likewise, that such of the old servants, as wished to resume their former situations at Thornhill, should be engaged, and that those who were now too old for service, should be allowed such trifling pen-

sions as might be required to make them comfortable in their old age.

Perfectly satisfied that my affairs were committed to the hands of a faithful steward, well qualified by experience for the charge confided in him, and whose attachment to my interests was sincere, I, on the following morning, set out on my return to Feltham.

Hewson had returned in my absence, and received me on my arrival. I had never seen him before. He was a man, whose manners in general society would be considered pleasing. They were manners which, expressing nothing, might be called conventionally good, and were such as a person, long used to the mingling in the bustle of the world, might be expected to acquire. He received me with an *empressement* evidently without meaning, and poured forth a torrent of common-place civilities, like a man whose cue it is to play the agreeable, for some underhand purpose of his own.

There was something in the expression of Hewson's countenance, too, to me extremely unpleasant. There was a coldness of eye, which was changed occasionally for a certain cunning

twinkle, and there was a curvature of the lip, and something generally about the region of the mouth, which indicated a licentious man, and one given to sensual indulgence. In his expression, there was nothing in the slightest degree intellectual, though it conveyed the impression, of considerable shrewdness, and worldly sagacity.

The joy of my sisters, on learning that I had now become the possessor of Thornhill, was sincere and warmly expressed, nor was Hewson deficient in his congratulations, which were only cut short, by the entrance of a party of gentlemen he had brought with him from Newmarket. These, it was easy to gather from their conversation, were what is called sporting characters, second or third-rate betters on the turf, and first-rate betters on a cockfight, or a boxing match. Among them was a clergyman, who was generally addressed by his companions by the name of Jack, and was certainly altogether a bad specimen of his cloth. After dinner, betting and horse-racing formed the principal topics, both of interest and conversation. Pocket-books were in every hand, and whoever ven-

tured to express an unguarded anticipation of any contingent event, was generally pulled up by an inquiry, whether he had courage to back his opinion. As I certainly wanted inclination, if not courage, to back mine, of course I was a mere cipher in such a party.

The bottle circulated freely, and the pleasures of the table being concluded, the party sat down to cards. I was not a gambler, in the strict sense of the word, because I had never yet been thrown into a situation where I was assailed by the temptation of high play. But I always experienced a degree of pleasing excitement from games of chance, even with the very moderate stakes, which my circumstances had allowed me to venture. Little fellowship as I felt with any of the company, I was weak enough to suffer myself to be prevailed on to engage in play. The stakes were high, my opponents were all experienced players, and the consequence as might be expected was, that when we rose from table, I was a loser to a very considerable amount. It was late when the party broke up, and on going to the drawing-room, I found my sisters

had retired. In no very pleasant humour I followed their example, moralizing on my pillow, till sleep closed my eyelids, and brought oblivion of my folly.

It gave me sincere pleasure on the following morning to witness the departure of the guests. They had left on me no very favourable impression, of Hewson's character and habits; and what I afterwards saw of his conduct to Jane, did not tend to raise him in my opinion. The manner in which he addressed her, betrayed nothing of the affectionate intercourse which marks a happy marriage. Towards her, his manner was cold, plausible, and unfeeling; and there was even in his perfunctory observance of the decencies of politeness, something which forced the conviction, that in different circumstances, he would not hesitate to violate them all.

I had intended to court this man's friendship, but I could not. I shrunk from him, as from something loathsome; and it was with difficulty that even my regard for Jane, made me consent to remain his guest for a few days. These a

length expired, and after a mournful farewell, Lucy and myself returned to Staunton, filled with pity for Jane's irremediable misfortune, in having become the wife of Hewson, and indulging melancholy forebodings of the future evils which awaited her.

CHAPTER III.

I've seen the day
That I have worn a visor, and could tell
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
Such as would please. 'Tis gone—'tis gone—'tis gone!
Romeo and Juliet.

ON our return to Staunton Court, we found that some change had taken place in the party since we had quitted it. Lord Lyndhurst and his sister Lady Eleanour had arrived. The former was in the library when I entered it. He lay extended on an ottoman, engaged in the perusal of the Morning Post newspaper, and his faculties were so deeply absorbed in the task, that he did not perceive my entrance till I stood opposite the fire. Then casting towards me a languid glance, he exclaimed—

“ Ah, Thornton, is that you! Monstrous glad to see you, 'pon my honour,” slightly raising himself at the same time, and extending

two fingers of his hand as a token of welcome.
“ Hope you’ve come to enliven the dull scene ;
for it is monstrous dull, upon my honour.”

“ Whatever effect my presence may have,
whether of enlivening the scene, or rendering it
still duller, here I am, at your lordship’s service.”

“ Duller, that’s impossible,” indulging in a
long yawn ; “ I do believe my jaws will crack
if I stay here much longer. There’s old Potts
last night bored me for two hours with his
long stories ; and I had scarcely dropped asleep
in an arm chair, when Lady Greystoke knock-
ed me up to make a fourth at half-crown whist,
for it seems she never plays higher. Half-
crown whist, Thornton, wasn’t that good ?”

“ Well, I hope you played the agreeable, and
consented.”

“ Why, what could I do ? I refused at first,
but Lady Greystoke’s a stiff old dowager, and
talked of the young men of her days, and moralized upon me ; and Lady Melicent quizzed
me, and called me the Sleeping Beauty, so I
was obliged to consent. But, after all, she was
monstrous angry, for I was her partner, and

made all kinds of mistakes and revokes, and she grumbled so confoundedly, because she lost two guineas. She can't bear losing her money."

"Not a singular failing. But where are the ladies?"

"Gone out, I believe. Eleanour wanted me to go too; but old Amersham had just been hauling me all over his vile farm, and I was knocked up. You've no idea, Thornton, what a bore it was. Would you believe it, he pulled me about to see ploughs, and great fat bullocks, and fields of turnips, and monstrous pigs, and sheep, and threshing-machines! I'm sure I wished him to have the benefit of one, with all my heart, for dragging me about so. Can you conceive a greater bore, Thornton?"

"Not easily, I confess."

Just then the ladies entered from their walk. Lady Melicent (for had there been an angel in company, she would first have caught my eye,) was blooming from exercise, and looking, I thought, more lovely than I had ever seen her. Her companion, too, was a pretty girl; but her beauty was of that dull and inanimate sort, which attracts no deeper admiration, than that

of the eye. The ceremonies of introduction and salutation had scarcely passed, when Lady Melicent, glancing her eye round the apartment, inquired for Lucy.

“You have not, I hope,” said she half smilingly, and half seriously, “dared to return without her? If you have, I shall exercise the authority I possess over all the gentlemen in this house, and charge you, on your fealty and allegiance, to set out instantly to bring her back.”

“That were indeed to evoke a spell of power,” I answered; “and one I could not choose but obey. But it is unnecessary. Lucy returned with me, and is now in her chamber.”

She gave me a smile of kindness, and turning to her companion, she said,

“Come, Eleanour, I must introduce you to my dear Lucy;” and the two damsels vanished from the apartment.

To any one but myself, the tone of the party was little if at all changed, by the arrival of the new guests. To me, however, all was changed. I saw that Lord Lyndhurst was regarded by every one, as the destined husband of Lady Melicent. That he had made proposals to Lord

Amersham, which had met an encouraging reception, I had no doubt. I thought, nay, I was sure, Lady Melicent did not love him ; but the very indifference—nay, stronger—the dislike she often manifested to his society and attentions, served but to provoke the conviction, that, urged by worldly motives, she had given a cold, perhaps even a reluctant consent, to be united to a man, in all the qualities of an intelligent being, a thousand degrees beneath her.

But my mind was not fixed. We are slow to believe anything, which would give a death-blow to our hopes ; and though sometimes the conviction was strong and irresistible, and the storm of jealousy raged within me, at others, one glance of her bright eye, one whisper of her sweet voice, would banish doubt and suspicion from my heart.

She knows, I thought, she must know I love her. It is impossible that the deep devotion I bear to her, should not be made intelligible by a thousand indications, minute perhaps, but not to be mistaken. And knowing that she is thus adored, can she make a sport of my feelings, and lead me on, by cruel encouragement, till

she beholds me at last irrecoverably lost and entangled, in the labyrinth of a hopeless passion? Oh no. To cherish even such a suspicion for a moment, what was it but foul treason to the lady of my love. Doubt and fear, at all events, had come too late, for I had set my life upon a cast, and I felt that I must stand the hazard of the die.

Weeks passed on, and everything proceeded as formerly at Staunton. Our morning excursions still continued, and though Lord Lyndhurst generally formed one of the party, watchful and engrossed as I was with only one object, it still fell to my lot to render any little act of gallantry or attention to Lady Melicent. That, compared with my rival, I was to her an object of preference, was what I could no longer doubt, and I longed for an opportunity of putting a period to the state of suspense, in which I suffered—of knowing the best or the worst, that could befall me—of becoming at once supremely blest, or more, if possible, than supremely miserable.

Well do I remember sitting whole hours in my chamber, meditating on fitting words in

which to embody the declaration of my love, and pouring forth, in its solitude, the eloquence, (for so I thought it) of deep, fervent, and overpowering passion. Thus, I thought, would I speak, thus would I lay bare my heart before her, and she should read at once its pride, and its humility, its hopes, its aspiring hopes, its fears, that seemed to fall cold and witheringly, on the very springs of life. I would, at least, give voice to my passion. I would, at least, not die, a silent and despairing lover.

But how different it is, to meditate a declaration like mine, in the confidence of solitary communion, and to utter it to the adored object. It was in vain. Days rolled on—she leant as formerly upon my arm—I sat beside her in the library—I listened to her sweet music, when I was the only listener, and might have spoken the words that burned for utterance within me, when no ear but her's could have caught the sound.

But I did *not* speak them. My lips refused their office. A glare as of the noontide sun was in my eyes, and a sound like the rush of mighty waters in my ears; and my knees trembled, and

I gasped for breath, as I vainly attempted to syllable her name. After such scenes, I would rush forth, half-frantic, into the Park, or bury myself in the solitude of my own apartment. There, in all the bitterness of self-reproach, I would curse myself for a coward, in having shrunk in silence and trembling from the trial I had courted.

Spring was now fast melting into summer, and reviving nature had once more brightened into life and love. The blossom was on the bush, and the bird on the bough. The sound of gladness came from above, and re-ascended from the earth unto the sky. Who could then wander forth into the woodlands, or the bright green meadows, and gaze on the gay and glorious face of nature, without feeling thankful that his lot had been cast, in a world so beautiful and happy? Yes. In bitterness of soul, I beheld the scene of glad revelry around me. I contributed not to swell the mighty diapason of gratitude and joy, which rose in one grand and universal voice from all created beings. I was as a discord in the harmony of Nature, a blot on her fair escutcheon. There was but one object

in my soul, and the whole world beside appeared a vast interminable blank.

The hopes which in their youthful vigour had blossomed in my heart, faded before the full expansion of the flower. The ecstatic dreams of bliss in which I had delighted to indulge, visited me no longer. I shrank even from the presence of the Lady Melicent, and as the destined period of my return to the army, drew near, I anticipated, with a gloomy satisfaction, the opportunity which would be then afforded me, of finding—an honourable grave. Yes; in another month, I would quit my country, never, never to return. Then, perhaps, the memory of my folly would be washed away by its retribution, and she would not refuse a tear to the memory of one, who had loved her, not wisely, but too well.

While my ideas flowed on in this melancholy channel, I was indeed an object to be pitied. I loathed society, yet, when forced to mingle in it, my spirits were unnaturally high. I laughed, I talked, I sang, and was perhaps, in the common acceptance of the term, delightful company. I rivalled Sir Cavendish Potts in lo-

quacity, and was as frisky, and apparently as light-hearted as Lord Amersham. Lady Grey-stoke, it is true, called me a foolish young man ; but Lady Eleanour declared me a charming creature, and in the vivacity of a heavy heart I rattled on. But when, after an evening thus spent, I retired to my chamber, who knew, or could know, the suffering that awaited me ! There, when the temporary excitement had passed away, and in the weariness of exhausted nature I cast myself on my pillow, then came the hours of dread and agony, and that dismal sinking of the heart, compared with which all other pains are but as dust in the balance. To such sufferings were added the pangs of self-reproach. The fatal temptation had not found me, I had sought it. In the pride and vanity of my heart, I had been buoyed up by visionary and foolish hopes, and could I complain, that these had now deserted me ?

In this melancholy mood of mind, I was walking one morning in one of the least frequented portions of the Park, when I met Lady Mellicent alone. She was going to a neighbouring cottage, and invited me to accompany her. Her

spirits were high, and she talked of several recent occurrences in a strain of animation, even more vivid than usual. The cottage was at no great distance, and we soon reached it. On our return, the conversation continued in the same strain. She rallied me on the late accession to my spirits.

“ Since the arrival of Lady Eleanour,” she said, “ you have become quite a different creature. You are no longer a moping meditative young man, like Jaques, melancholy and gentlemanlike—in manner solemn and sententious, and philosophizing with the air of a cynic, on all the foolish people about you. I congratulate you both on the improvement and its cause.”

“ And you attribute this change to the presence of Lady Eleanour ?”

“ Certainly. The miracle commenced the very day you first met. I am pretty accurate about dates, and we women, you know, are tolerably sharp-sighted in each other’s affairs, whatever we may be in our own.”

“ And yet you are mistaken. I admit the charms of the Lady Eleanour, but she is, and can be nothing to me. Do *you* think her a per-

son likely to inspire a deep and lasting passion?"

"Really, I think Lady Eleanour a very loveable person indeed. She is pretty, amiable, and not too clever, and what more could any reasonable man desire. As for your deep and lasting passion, I imagine it to be altogether a thing of romance,—a mere fabulous creation of the poets."

"You do not, then, believe in the existence of such love?"

"Why, to say the truth, I have no settled belief on the matter. Such love may have been, and may be again, in some strong and peculiar circumstances, just as ghosts have appeared, and may, for aught I know, appear again, though, having never met with the one or the other, my judgment with regard to both rests in abeyance."

"Oh, why is Lady Melicent so unjust, at once to our sex, and her own! Most of all, why is she so unjust, to her own noble nature, as to doubt her power of exciting, and ours of feeling such love as alone is worthy of its object,—deep,

fervent, and eternal,—or, if perishable, perishable only with the heart that gave it birth !”

I would have proceeded, but my voice here faltered, and I stopped. But I had already said enough. I felt that the Rubicon was past, that I had reached the awful crisis, when my fate must in a few moments be decided. As I pronounced the last words, I looked upon her face, with such concentrated intensity of gaze, as that with which a criminal endeavours to read his chance of mercy, on the countenance of his judge.

Her eye met mine, and a blush deep as crimson suffused her cheek. As she answered, she looked upon the ground, and a faint smile was on her lips.

“ The love you talk of, is the love not of real life, but of romance. It is the love one reads of in a novel, of some high-born heroine in a cottage among the Welsh mountains, or in the south of France, preceded generally by something about the cooing of doves, and followed by a copy of verses, or a serenade from some noble lover in disguise. This is but the fanci-

ful theory of love, not the dull and vulgar reality."

"Oh, breathe not," I replied, "such treason of the human heart. *You*, indeed, have never felt such love, for where is he who is worthy to be its object! But, believe there is at least one bosom——"

I paused, for agitation choked my utterance; my limbs refused their office, and I stood, with every fibre quivering, rooted to the spot.

She too stopped.

In a few moments my powers were restored, and I knelt before her.

"Yes," I exclaimed, "I have *dared* to love you; turn from me with disdain—I know my crime, and I ask only for its punishment. I know you are above my sphere—I know such passion is folly, is madness—I know its fate, and I am prepared to meet it."

As I spoke, her frame too trembled, and she stood silent, and with downcast eyes.

"Oh, speak," I continued; "one word, not of anger, but of pity, is all—all I require."

She stood still unmoved before me; there

was no motion of her lips, but in a faint, and scarcely audible voice, I heard the word—

“ Rise.”

I obeyed, and stood once more beside her.

“ I know,—I feel that I have given you pain, and would not willingly prolong it. Command me from your presence—bid me quit you for ever, and you shall be obeyed. My lips shall but breathe one farewell, and henceforward I shall be to you but as a dream.”

She was silent. I know not what there was in her look, for I saw it undergo no change, but hope dawned suddenly on my heart, and I took the hand that hung motionless by her side.

Her face, which had till now been pale, became in one instant the colour of carnation. Her very fingers reddened as I raised them to my lips, but they were not withdrawn. Words cannot express the blessedness of that moment, for then my heart told me I was beloved.

For some seconds, perhaps minutes, (for who in such a situation could take note of time?) we stood silent and motionless. No—not motionless—for the bosom of the Lady Melicent heaved tumultuously, and her heart even visibly beat

itself against the walls of its prison, as if struggling to be free. I felt the small quick pulses of her hand, which still lay passively in mine, and encircling her with my arm, I drew her to my bosom with a pressure as soft and gentle as a mother's first embrace to her new-born babe.

She started convulsively as she felt this, and her eyes, which till then had never met mine, were raised to my face, with a gentle look of fear, and of reproach.

It was understood. I asked for no declaration of passion, no avowal of love, and, releasing her from my scarcely perceptible embrace, I placed her arm within my own, and we walked on silently, in a path sheltered by shrubs and underwood, from the chance of observation.

Long did we wander that morning, and swiftly fled the winged hours ; and ere the sound of the dinner-bell had warned us of the necessity of our return, I had imprinted the first kiss on the glowing lips of Lady Melicent.

At dinner, we met again. Never did conqueror advance to a triumph with lighter step, or prouder heart, than those with which I en-

tered the drawing-room. Lady Melicent was there, and never had she seemed in my eyes so transcendently lovely. All the radiance that elegance of adornment can lend to beauty had been contributed, as if to barb the arrows of her charms, and render their wounds incurable. In everything connected with Lady Melicent, there was something pre-eminently refined and *recherché*. On that day she wore jewels. They were few, but rich and beautiful; and I could have exclaimed, in my enthusiasm, as I gazed on her—

Up, up, fair bride! and call
Thy stars from out their several boxes; take
Thy rubies, pearls, and emeralds forth, and make
Thyself a constellation of them all.

The colour on her cheeks was more brilliant than usual, and her eye, though restless and unfixed, was if possible brighter. Once, and but once only, it met mine, and it was instantly withdrawn; but her glance, transient as it was, had spoken what volumes would have been insufficient to express.

For myself, though my mind was, by the events of the morning, freed from a burden, which had pressed on it almost to madness, I

was even less capable than formerly, of entering into the spirit of society. So perfect was the enjoyment I derived from the concentration of my own thoughts, that I found it almost impossible, to divert any part of my attention to the scene in which I mingled.

I had the misfortune, again to sit next Lady Greystoke at dinner, and my conduct must have certainly formed a striking contrast, to what it had been on a former occasion. Lady Greystoke talked a great deal, but not one particle of her discourse, did I either hear or understand; and when the expression of her countenance made it palpable that an answer on my part, was become necessary, it was generally so little apropos to the subject, as to excite in the old lady, serious doubts with regard to the perfect sanity of my intellects. To do her justice, I do think she bore with me very patiently; but when my absence of mind extended so far, that, instead of port, the wine she preferred, I ordered the servant to fill her glass with porter, and in place of chicken, sent her plate back loaded with the leg of a goose, her choler was very pardonably roused, and endurance

could extend no farther. I never afterwards recovered her good graces.

Of what passed in the dining-room, after the departure of the ladies, I have not the slightest recollection. Till the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, I was as completely cut off, from all communication with the external world, as a new-born puppy. All the avenues of my senses, were blocked up. I neither saw, heard, smelt, touched, nor tasted, and partook more of the nature of a pure and abstract *Ens*, than I recollect ever to have done before, or since.

Corporeal life again, dawned with the presence of the ladies. One look of bashful consciousness from Lady Melicent, as I entered the drawing-room, recalled me once more to the material world. In my then state of excited feeling, I durst not trust myself to approach her. I was jealous of observation, and imagined that every look and word, was scrutinized by those around me. I dreaded lest the secret confined to two conscious bosoms, might be laid open to profane eyes.

Aware as I was of the necessity of present concealment, reserve towards Lady Melicent

was palpably dictated by prudence. But what weak and inconsistent creatures we are ! How few of our actions are guided by reason, how many by impulse ! Lord Amersham, who was fond of music, asked his daughter to sing.

“ Don’t ask me, papa,” she answered ; “ indeed I cannot.”

“ Come, Lyndhurst, and you, Thornton, do you try your influence. Two young men may succeed, when one old one fails,” said Lord Amersham, laughingly. “ Now, Lyndhurst, you try first.”

Lord Lyndhurst, who was lolling in an easy chair, slightly raised himself on this appeal, and in the letter, though scarcely in the spirit of his instructions, yawningly joined in the request for music.

Lady Melicent instantly declined, even more decidedly than before.

“ Come, Thornton, you’re our forlorn hope ; exert yourself, or all’s lost.”

“ Where the request of Lord Lyndhurst and your Lordship has been denied, it were vain, indeed, to hope that mine would be granted.”

“ Ah, who knows ?” said his lordship ;
“ make the experiment at all events.”

Vain and senseless as I was, I could not resist the silly and dangerous triumph which I saw before me. I approached Lady Melicent, who was seated alone at some distance, and in a voice low and inaudible to the rest of the party, I added my entreaties to those which had already been ineffectual. She answered—

“ If you ask it, I will try ; but I fear I cannot.” And a glance of fond reproach accompanied her words.

I then, to avoid suspicion, addressed her in a louder tone.

“ You have heard, Lady Melicent, that I am deputed to beg of you, in the name of Lord Amersham and Lord Lyndhurst, to oblige the company by singing. What I durst not presume to ask in my own character, I now humbly solicit as their deputy.”

Lady Melicent sang. Her voice was weak and tremulous, but never did it sink so deeply into my heart. That indeed was to me a moment of pride, which kings might envy !

I was soon, however, awakened to a full

sense of the danger I had incurred, by observing the look of strong displeasure that marked the countenance of Lady Greystoke. That Lady Melicent should have been influenced by my entreaties, to grant a favour which she had already denied to her father, and the man selected by her family as her future husband, seemed in her eyes a flagrant violation of that propriety, for which she was on all occasions a rigid stickler. Even Lord Amersham, I thought, was not much gratified by the success of my mission, but I could never discover that any serious suspicions had been excited by my folly.

CHAPTER IV.

Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that,
And manage it against despairing thoughts.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

I LOVED, and if there be truth in woman's words, I was beloved again. Yet not with the consciousness of reciprocal affection, ceases a lover's fear. Seldom calm and unruffled, are the waters of his spirit. There is a tide of dread and apprehension, which is continually ebbing and flowing in his soul. Even in the very excess of my good fortune, there was something which had a tendency to excite fear. Could I look on the Lady Melicent—all that nature,—all that rank and fortune had made her—and at once undoubtingly and confidently believe, that, being all I saw and knew her to be, she was, she could be *mine*?

Yes, often I did so believe, and then indeed

I was happy. Yet how many obstacles to our union, still remained. Could I hope for the consent of Lord Amersham? What had I to offer, which could serve as a counterpoise, in his estimation, to the high rank, and immense fortune of Lord Lyndhurst, who had already declared himself her suitor? How small, how utterly insignificant, were my worldly claims, when put in competition with his? If I excelled him in personal qualities—and, without vanity, I felt I might assume such a superiority—what was this, in the calm and calculating eye of a father, compared with the splendid settlements, the influence, and the distinction, which belonged to an union with my rival? Under the circumstances, indeed, it seemed as if there was something even ridiculous, in my venturing to make proposals to Lord Amersham for an alliance with his daughter. What could I expect, but that they would instantly be rejected, with scorn and contempt? I was too proud to encounter such a rejection. A mortification so humiliating, was one, to which I felt that all my philosophy, could not enable me to submit with patience.

The interviews of Lady Melicent and myself, were rare, for the circumstances in which we were placed, rendered it necessary that they should be arranged, with the greatest prudence and caution. Our intercourse was secret, and on that account perhaps more sweet. It was seldom that we met alone, and then it was with beating hearts. Oh ! these blessed but fleeting moments, within whose narrow limits the delight of centuries was concentrated and compressed, it is with a throbbing pulse that I even now recall them to my memory !

But at other times, I at least enjoyed the privilege of beholding her, and though my lips were silent, my eyes were free. Her presence was indeed, become as the life-blood to my heart. Sometimes I would sit with a volume in my hand, one line of which I never read, secretly watching her motions, and drinking in, even the most trifling word her lips might syllable. Then at night, when I retired to my chamber, not calmly was my head laid upon my pillow, not gently and serenely, did sleep descend upon my eyelids, for there was fever in my blood, and a burning in my limbs, and I could not rest.

Often did I rise from my sleepless couch, and throwing open my window, sit for hours in the moonshine, and gaze on the light that twinkled from the lattice of her chamber window. And if a shadow fell but for a moment on the curtain which shaded it, I knelt as in the presence of a superior being, till it had passed away. Neither waking nor in sleep, was she absent from my thoughts. By day I gazed on her, and by night she visited my dreams.

In our interviews, I communicated to her, all my hopes and fears, and told all the obstacles, that presented themselves to our union. Our hopes, indeed, were in unison, but she partook not of my fears. In her glowing imagination, difficulties vanished, and the horizon of our future destiny, contained no cloud to darken its beauty and serenity. She told me, indeed, that the heart of her father was set on her union with Lord Lyndhurst, and that the latter had already made an offer of his hand, which he was urgent she should accept. In the present situation of affairs, therefore, it was too evident, that any proposals I might make to Lord Amersham, would have the effect of putting a complete and

final stop to our correspondence, or at least of rendering its continuance a matter of great and almost insurmountable difficulty.

For the present, our engagement was to be secret. It was better, indeed, that in rejecting the addresses of Lord Lyndhurst, her father should not imagine that she was influenced by any previous attachment. But this done, on my return to England, which would certainly be in the course of the following year, we would go to Lord Amersham, and lay before him the truth. We would tell him that the happiness of both depended on our union, that our troth was already plighted, and in such circumstances, she, who knew him well, assured me, he could not—he would not refuse his consent. But even if we should be deceived in these fond hopes, still, still she would be mine. She loved her father; she had always loved him. She was an only child, and in her had centred all his love. But there are holier ties than even those, which link together the hearts of parents and their offspring. By these, she was bound to me, and no exercise of paternal authority should induce her to violate those vows of constancy, and un-

swerving love, which in the presence of God, we had sworn to each other.

Thus assured, in those blessed and happy hours, doubt was banished from our bosoms. What doubt, indeed, would not the sight of that countenance—the glance of that eye, have dissipated in a moment?

But love, though the sweetener of life, cannot constitute its business. In whatever relation we may stand to society, we are bound to the performance of certain active duties, inconsistent with a life of contemplative indulgence. The world is our creditor, and a hard one, for it will relax nothing of its claims. A life devoted to love, though one of the staple fictions of poets and romance writers, is incompatible both with the natural character of man, and his social relations. Our bodies and our minds are alike framed for action, and he who could merge all his duties, in the indulgence even of the purest passion, would in so doing, prove himself to be an object not of love, but of contempt.

The hour which was to tear me from the presence and society of her I loved, approached, and came. We had met the evening before my

departure, (for it was then summer,) once more to repeat our vows of constancy, and say—if our lips could speak it—Farewell.

Well do I remember the spot, where, seated with her head resting on my bosom, I kissed away the bright tears that flowed fast down her cheeks, at the prospect of our separation. It was beneath a huge tree, whose branches spread higher and wider than those of its surrounding brothers, and which, from some ancient tradition, was known by the name of "The Wizard Oak." It stood deep in the woodlands, in a solitude rarely disturbed, save by the footsteps of the woodman.

Here it was that we parted.

We had met to speak, yet we spoke not. The deep silence of the tranquil evening, was broken by no vows, or protestations of fervent and unchanging love. Were they needed? No. I read her truth in the convulsive heaving of her bosom, in the tears which my lips drank up, as they trickled from their bed.

At length we rose, and supported by my arm, we walked together to the extremity of the

wood, and our hearts told us, that the moment of the final struggle was come at last.

I cast myself on my knees before her. I invoked blessings on her head, for the proud gift of her love to one so unworthy. She extended her hand to me, and I arose.

“ Oh, grieve not thus !” I exclaimed, for I saw she was much agitated—“ The pang of parting is bitter, but it is short. I go happy, for if I fall, I know there is one faithful heart to deplore me ; if I return, it will be to enjoy the unspeakable reward of your love.”

Lady Melicent spoke not, she could not speak.

“ I see,—I feel, that my lingering here but adds to your distress, and I will tear myself away.”

“ Oh, no, no !” she exclaimed, clasping my hand between both of her’s, as if to prevent my departure—“ Not yet.”

I waited silently till the paroxysm was past, then gently releasing her from my embrace, and imprinting on her lips one long last kiss, murmured Farewell, as I sprung forward with the speed of an arrow, and we saw each other no more.

On that evening Lady Melicent was visible

to no eye, and Lord Amersham reported, that she was confined to her chamber, by a severe headach. I passed the night in gazing on the light that shone from her chamber window, but it was crossed by no shadow, nor could I detect the smallest indication that the apartment was occupied by a living tenant.

In the morning I descended to the breakfast-room—the party had already assembled, but Lady Melicent was not there. Breakfast passed, and my carriage was at the door. My heart smote me as I bade farewell to Lord Amersham. I felt as if I had taken an unfair advantage of his hospitality, to seduce the affections of his daughter. I felt, that the simplicity and openness of his character, had not been met with the reciprocal qualities in mine. He had welcomed me to his house as a friend and a relation—had I acted the part of one?

A still small voice within me answered, No.

Nothing, however, could exceed his kindness. “Good bye, Thornton, my boy,” said the old nobleman—“Good bye, and may God bless you. I hope to see you come back with a red ribbon at least. Let me know if they ill use

you, at the Horse Guards. I have not much interest there, but I'll do what I can. I am sure Melicent is sorry she is unable to bid you farewell, and give you assurances of her good wishes before you set out on your campaigns. Take care of yourself, you know. No volunteering on Out Piquets or Forlorn Hopes, but get distinction in the regular course, and then come back and marry a pretty girl, and settle down as a country gentleman at Thornhill."

In reply, I thanked his lordship, and begged him to convey my acknowledgments to Lady Melicent, for the more than ordinary kindness I had experienced at Staunton, which, I assured him, should never be obliterated from my memory.

My parting with Lucy (for at the earnest request of Lady Melicent, I had consented to her remaining at Staunton some time longer) was melancholy, yet, compared with the parting of the preceding evening, it cost but a trifling pang. The dear and loving girl clasped her arms around my neck, and hiding her face in my bosom, wept bitterly. There were many spectators of the scene, but poor Lucy, in yielding to her

natural emotion, forgot them all. She clung to me, as to one from whom she would not be parted, and her sobs were violent and hysterical. Nature became gradually exhausted—I felt the grasp with which she still held me, relax, and after a mental blessing, I kissed her lips, and consigning the almost fainting girl, to the arms of Lord Amersham, I sprang into the carriage, and drove off. For the first few minutes of my journey, I was confused and stupefied; then I gazed from the carriage window, to catch, in the windings of the avenue, an occasional glimpse of the house, as its summit rose above the trees, or was visible in their intervals. Within its walls, was contained all that I most loved on earth, and my eyes were still turned towards it, long after I had emerged from the demesne, and it was no longer visible.

London was the object of my destination. I had lingered at Staunton till the last moment, and there was barely time, before the expiration of my leave, to make the necessary preparations for the voyage, and to equip myself for the field. In my escape from Madrid, I had lost all my baggage; and rapid as London tradesmen pro-

verbially are, under the excitement of the *auri sacra fames*, my wants could not be supplied in a day. On my arrival, however, I lost no time in taking measures for my full equipment. The exertions of tradesmen of every denomination were put in instant requisition ; and Prosser, that most facetious and urbane of accoutrement makers, promised to defer the execution of an order, he had just received from the Prince of Wales, in order to supply me, *quam primum*, with sash, gorget, epaulettes, hair-trigger pistols, and a sword, in comparison with whose temper, a Damascus blade was as nothing.

While these preparations were in progress, I had a few days of leisure, which I found myself at liberty to devote to certain necessary arrangements in my affairs, and to entering a little into the amusements of town. By the latter, I endeavoured to dissipate a certain gloom, which, in spite of the brightness of my prospects, hung occasionally on my spirits.

In order to prevent my being utterly forgotten at the Horse Guards, I adopted Lord Amersham's advice, and determined, before quitting

town, to attend the levee of the Commander-in-Chief, and personally solicit the promotion, which I thought was due to my services. With this view I waited on Colonel Torrens, and having informed him of my claims, and their object, I was directed to attend on the following Tuesday, at two o'clock, when I should have the honour of an interview with Sir David Dundas.

I was punctual in my attendance at the appointed hour, and, on my arrival, was ushered into a large antechamber, filled with officers of all ranks and descriptions. The levee was already proceeding. General after general was admitted into the presence-chamber, and after a longer or a shorter audience, was dismissed, to make way for a successor.

Three tedious hours did I wait before my turn for admission came. They passed, however, less heavily than might have been expected, for, in the crowd which filled the antechamber, I had the good fortune to meet with an agreeable companion. He was a Major O'Shaughnessy, a captain of seventeen years'

standing, who had only recently received a brevet majority. The Major was most vehement in the exposition of his wrongs. He had endured all varieties of climate—he had fought in the East, and in the West—had been taken prisoner by Tippoo Saib—and shot through the body, at the capture of Guadaloupe. In his return from India, the ship in which he sailed, had been wrecked, and his wife and two children drowned. With all this series of service and suffering, he still remained a captain, nor had even the promotion of brevet, been given to him till it had become his right, from being bestowed on every other officer of similar standing in the army. Still the veteran's spirit was unbroken, and he that day attended the levee for the first time of his life, apparently less from the hope of any beneficial consequence to himself, than from a certain abstract pleasure, which he felt in the detail of his wrongs. When I compared my own claims and services with his, I could scarcely help feeling a little ashamed, of the errand on which I had come, and was even disposed to demur to my own right to advancement in the

service, when such officers as my grey-haired companion, were suffered to remain unrewarded with promotion.

While engaged in these reflections, I heard my name pronounced by the usher in a loud voice, and starting up, I passed immediately through a folding door, and stood in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief. He was an emaciated old man, apparently in the very last stage of physical debility, and evidently altogether unequal, to the arduous and important duties of the office, to which he had been recently appointed. Still the air of a soldier had not deserted him; age had not descended lightly on his head, but he did not bend under the burden of his years. His person was erect, and one might in his gait and deportment, still discern some remnant of the man, who had studied discipline and tactics, under the immediate eye of Frederick the Great. To that monarch, indeed, as he is represented in his later years, Sir David Dundas was not without some personal resemblance.

On my entrance, Sir David bowed, and requested me to inform him of my claims and

wishes. I did so. I stated, I was now a captain of nearly five years' standing. That I had served in America; that I had twice been taken prisoner in the Peninsula; that I had once the cleverness and good sense to escape; that I was now about to return to my regiment abroad; in short, that he then saw before him a most excellent and praiseworthy officer, whom it would be highly creditable to his own judgment, and beneficial to the service to promote. In fact, having cast off the modesty, which encumbered the eloquence of Othello, I prudently did everything in my power, to

“ Grace my cause in speaking of myself.”

Sir David, to do him justice, heard me out with the most imperturbable patience, then assured me that my claims should be noted, and that it would give him pleasure to promote my views, whenever a favourable opportunity might occur. He concluded by two or three bows, then ringing his bell, the door was thrown open, another name announced, and I took my departure. Such was the conclusion of the only levee I ever attended at the Horse-Guards.

In the course of a week, I found nothing further remained to detain me in England, and getting into the Falmouth Mail, soon found myself at my point of embarkation. A packet was about to sail on the following morning, and I went on board the evening of my arrival.

CHAPTER V.

Thou hast talk'd
 Of sallies, and retires ; of trenches, tents,
 Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,
 Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,
 Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain,
 And all the currents of a heady fight.

Henry IV.

ONCE more upon the deep. With a flowing sheet, we ran rapidly on our voyage, and on the fourth day had skirted the mountainous waters of the Bay of Biscay, and were to the southward of Cape Finisterre. We saw the Burlings on the evening of the seventh, passed Fort St Julian in the night, and at day-dawn, beheld the towers of Belem, gilded by the radiance of the morning sun.

I have never seen Naples or Genoa, but when viewed from the sea, I can conceive nothing more beautiful than Lisbon. It rises on the side of a magnificent amphitheatre of hills, gra-

dually heightening as it recedes from the shore, and widening its expanse, till the eye in gazing on its palaces and convents, becomes almost confused in the mighty wilderness of dwellings.

I had known Lisbon before, and the eventful period which had intervened since I last quitted it, had produced little change on the city or its inhabitants. Apparently no people could be more loyal, the national cockade was in every hat, and those who had formerly been peaceful citizens, now donned their weapons, and went forth arrayed in the pride, the pomp, and panoply of glorious war.

The grand dépôt of the army was at Belem. Thither were sent the sick and the wounded, and perhaps scarcely fewer in number, those who found in sickness, a convenient excuse for avoiding the fatigues and hazards of a campaign. The streets were crowded with British officers, apparently in the full enjoyment of youthful lustihood and vigour, who, though unequal to encounter the duties of the field, were perfectly equal to mingle in all the gaiety and dissipation of Lisbon. Such characters were usually contemptuously distinguished by the

title of *Belem loungers*. I was not at all disposed to swell their numbers, and having purchased such cattle and stores as were necessary for my field equipment, no obstruction remained, to delay the moment of my departure. A detachment of about fifty men, belonging to several regiments of the second division of the army, was placed under my command; and my horses and baggage having been sent forward by land, I embarked with the party on the Tagus.

The Tagus and its golden sands! What dull soul is he, who says there is no magic in a name? It is not true, that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," if all the associations connected with its fragrance, be lost in the change. At all events, I embarked on the Tagus, prepared to admire both the river, and its scenery.

When we had lost sight of Lisbon, I sat in the stern of our little vessel, recalling all that history or romance had connected with its waters, as the poles of the boatmen, slowly and lazily propelled us forward. After all; I have seen finer rivers than the Tagus. There is seldom anything beautiful, and never anything

grand, in its scenery. It is true, its banks are occasionally clothed with vineyards and olive groves, and such things sound well in description. But the woods of old England are finer objects than the latter, and a cottager's garden quite as pretty a feature in a landscape as a Portuguese vineyard.

Five weary days did we journey on the Tagus, counteracted in our progress, by the united influence of wind and stream, running ashore on sand-banks, at least a dozen times a-day, and encountering all those "moving accidents by flood," to which fresh-water travellers are liable. On the fifth night we reached Punheté; and the river becoming shallower and more difficult to navigate, the higher we advanced, on the sixth morning we quitted the boats, and commenced our march across the country, towards Almeida, in the neighbourhood of which, by the latest accounts before our departure, it was most probable we should fall in with the army. The intelligence we received from the country people with regard to the movements of Lord Wellington, was at first vague and contradictory; but in proportion as

we approached nearer to the scene of operation, it became more definite. We learned, on testimony impossible to be doubted, that Almeida had fallen, and that the allied forces were in full retreat, closely followed by the enemy, and accordingly changing our course, we endeavoured as soon as possible to intersect the line of march, on which it was probable we should fall in with the retiring army.

The situation of our little detachment, indeed, was not without its difficulties. On quitting the boats, we had only four days' provisions; and had we been too late in arriving at our destined point, there was every chance of our falling into the hands of the enemy, who were rapidly advancing in pursuit.

Our fourth day's march brought us to Penalva. There we learned that a division of the British army, were retreating towards us, and that we should probably fall in with them, on the following day. We learned likewise, that a party of French cavalry had, in the course of the day, been seen hovering in the neighbourhood of the village, in which we then lay. On the following morning, we were early on our march, and

had proceeded several leagues, without being able to detect any indication of the proximity of an armed force. At length, upon the summit of a hill, as far distant as the eye could reach, a gleam of unusual brightness was discernible, which gradually extended down its side, in one long and unbroken line. It was the glancing of arms, though those that bore them were yet invisible. As they drew nearer, the sight of the scarlet uniform, put a stop to any apprehensions which might have lurked within us, and we joyfully recognised friends and countrymen, in the advancing body. It was the division of General Hill, to which we belonged. On its approach, I rode up to the Hon. General Stewart, who led the advance, and reported my own arrival, and that of my party, and had once more the satisfaction of joining my regiment, as it passed on the line of march.

There is never anything melancholy, in the meeting of soldiers. With them, the present is everything, the past a point, the future a blank. The greeting of surviving friends, is seldom embittered by recollections of those who are no more. In a life of danger and casualty, this is

natural. Death is too common an occurrence, to make any very vivid or lasting impression. His presence is but an every-day event. Soldiers become accustomed to the terrors of his eye, and from frequently regarding him, lose their fear in their familiarity. They love their living friends not the less, that they mourn not for those who are departed.

There was certainly no want of warmth in the greeting of my companions. They thronged around me, and kind inquiries, and cordial pressure of the hands were exchanged, as my eyes rested on those who had been endeared to me by communion of pleasures, and perhaps still more, by the fellowship of danger and privation. Some, indeed, I missed from the circle, for during my absence, war had claimed its victims. They were gone, and a word of praise, a passing thought of regret, was all the tribute offered to their memory.

The British army continued their retreat, without annoyance from the enemy, and, after a halt of a day or two, which a series of severe marches rendered almost necessary, took up their position on the heights of Busaco. Our

division, whose route had hitherto been on the left of the Mondego, crossed that river on the 26th, and formed the right wing of the army. Our position on these mountains seemed admirably chosen. The ridge of which it consisted extended in a northerly direction about eight miles, affording a complete command of all the roads to Lisbon, and the road to Coimbra, which passed on its extreme left. On the low ground, in front, was collected the main body of the enemy's army, whose intention of forcing our position soon became evident. Never before had I seen so large a force collected, as it were, into a single focus. It was, indeed, a sight stirring to the spirit. The officers stood singly, or collected in groups, on the summit of the hills, gazing on the fires that blazed in the camp beneath them, and the peaceful occupations of those with whom they were so soon to be engaged in deadly contest.

While I was thus engaged, the sergeant of my company came up, and presenting the orders of the day, I found, on reading them, that I was destined that evening for the duty of Out Piquet. I confess, that the first ideas which the

knowledge of this circumstance inspired, were not pleasant ones. The duty of Out Piquet was always one of danger, but in the existing situation of the armies it involved peculiar peril. It was certain—next to certain, that we should be attacked and driven in during the night, preparatory to a general engagement. I returned the orderly book to the sergeant in silence, and continued gazing on the scene around me. If possible, the interest it excited had become more vivid, in proportion to the increase of hazard, to which I now saw myself exposed.

But the hour of evening approached, and the necessity of preparation roused me from my reverie. I returned to my tent, and gave directions for the instant packing of my baggage, and having finished a solitary meal, repaired to the spot appointed for the parade of the Piquets. As night closed in, we descended the brow of the hill, and marched in deep silence to our station, distant but a few hundred yards from the advanced posts of the enemy. It was pointed out to me by the Quarter-master-general, who accompanied the party, and having received the necessary directions, which were spoken in a

whisper scarcely audible, and the expression of his good wishes for our safe return, he retired.

The Piquet under my command, consisted of a subaltern, two sergeants, and sixty rank and file. In our front, and on either flank, videttes were pushed up as closely to the enemy, as was found practicable, without occasioning a discovery of our position. A short distance in rear of the videttes, were placed a sergeant and six men, and between this party and the main body of the Piquet, was stationed the subaltern and fifteen, thus forming a connected chain of communication from front to rear.

Independently of the feeling of insecurity, which naturally attached to our situation and duty, I have seldom spent a more uncomfortable night. It was dark and gusty, and the wind came at intervals, accompanied with heavy torrents of rain. We were without shelter from the inclemency of the weather, and the soldiers, wrapped in their greatcoats, lay down in the ranks, their hands still grasping their firelocks, and prepared, in case of alarm, to spring instantly to their feet.

Heavily and slowly did the hours that night

flow by. The sounds of song and merriment, that came by fits upon the wind from the enemy's camp, by degrees died away, and the occasional neighing of horses and braying of mules, alone gave indication of its vicinity. Aware that the safety even of the whole army might be endangered by any negligence in the discharge of my duty, I passed the night on foot, visiting occasionally the different detachments and videttes, and endeavouring to detect, by ear or eye, indication of an advancing foe. Sometimes I would advance on tiptoe towards a point, from which some suspicious sound appeared to proceed, and then hurry back on finding I was deceived. When tired by fruitless watching, I would sometimes cast myself on the ground, and gaze for a few minutes on the dark canopy of clouds, which hung loweringly in the sky, then spring again upon my feet, at the fancied sound of human voices, or the approaching foot-falls that rung upon my ear.

Often, too, at intervals, did the thought of England—of my sisters, and of one bright object even dearer than they, steal unawares into my heart, in the silent watches of the night.

Often did I see the beloved forms, floating towards me, beautiful in the darkness ; but when, with extended arms, I would have pressed them to my bosom, I knew they were but shadows, for they flitted past me, as if borne onwards, by the viewless winds.

Thus did the night wear on, and at length the first streaks of morn, were seen dappling the edge of the horizon. No form of danger had approached us, and we were already with joyful hearts, preparing to return with the dawn to our encampment.

Suddenly a shot was heard, which, after a silence of a few moments, was succeeded by the irregular firing of a larger body. Every instant it became more frequent, and between the intervals was heard the tramp of many feet, and the murmur of voices. It was but the work of a moment in the men to rouse themselves, and stand prepared for the impending attack, and scarcely had they done so, when the advanced parties appeared, driven back breathless, and in confusion from the front. They re-formed in the rear of the main body, and were ordered instantly to prime and load. Before time was

afforded to effect this operation, the enemy had advanced within a few yards, and giving them a volley, the retreat instantly commenced. Our fire was returned with interest, and it was evident the enemy had attacked us in overwhelming numbers. We had now retreated some distance, and were still closely pursued, when a quick but desultory firing suddenly arose on our right. This proceeded from a detachment of a Rifle battalion of the 60th, which had been thrown in advance, in order to support the Piquets in case of attack. The pursuit of our assailants was instantly checked, and we continued to retire, with little further molestation from the enemy, who, in their turn, were driven back on the main body of the army. In this skirmish four men of the Piquet were killed, and seven wounded.

My regiment, when I rejoined it, was under arms. The sound of firing was yet heard occasionally from below, which showed, though the enemy were still hid by the mist-wreaths of the morning, that they were on the advance. As day gradually brightened, general officers were seen anxiously reconnoitring from the summits

of the ridge, the movements of the hostile army, and aides-de-camp and adjutant-generals rode past at full speed, delivering orders to the different parts of the line. The dreadful voice of the artillery, which had been hitherto silent, then rent the air with its thunders, and the fire of musquetry became evidently heavier and more continuous. At this moment, my attention was arrested by the appearance of Lord Wellington, who rode up, with foam on his bridle, in front of the division. Upwards of two years had elapsed since I had last seen him. These had been to him, certainly, years of mental toil and anxiety. But there was little change discernible in his appearance. There was the same fire in his eye, and animation in his countenance, and his air betrayed even more of that confidence and self-possession, with which I had formerly been struck. He delivered his orders to Sir Rowland Hill, with promptitude and rapidity, and instantly setting spurs to his steed, again vanished from our view.

The point which the enemy selected for his attack, was on our left, in front of the station occupied by the 3d division. Their advance up

the hill had been made under a severe fire, and on their attaining its summit, they were instantly charged with the bayonet, and driven back with heavy loss. Our division moved to the left, to support the part of the line thus assailed, but our assistance was unnecessary, the troops already engaged having proved themselves fully adequate to the repulse of the enemy. The firing, which had now ceased in our part of the line, was still warmly kept up in the centre, and on the left, both of which points, had been made the scene of formidable attack, by the enemy. From our station on the right, little of the action was discernible, and our gaze was principally directed to the large masses of the French army, which were now visible in the plain beneath, and whose motions we watched with curiosity and interest. These were soon observed to be retiring, and the only firing heard was that of the artillery and of the light division, which still continued to follow the enemy, and harass them in their retreat. By degrees this too died away, and all was silent.

During the remainder of the 27th, no farther attack was made by the French on our position.

Tired with the fatigues of the night, and the excitement I had since undergone, I threw myself on my pallet, and slept soundly. Towards evening I awoke. Willingly would I have slept again, for visions of tranquil beauty had visited me in slumber, and it was painful to exchange the bright world of dreams, in which I had been ranging, for that less lovely reality, to which I was again awakened.

The night passed undisturbed, and two hours before the dawn of day, we were under arms. It was the general expectation of the army, that the attack would be again renewed. It was not. The hours passed on without alarm, and when the sun rose, the enemy were observed in motion, on the road leading to Coimbra and Oporto, which passed on the extreme left of the Sierra. In consequence of this, we were ordered instantly to march, and again crossing the Mondego, Sir Rowland Hill's division continued their retreat towards Lisbon, by the road leading through Thomar and Santarem.

Till our arrival at the lines of Torres Vedras, we saw nothing further of the French army. Our march continued for ten days, and it was

indeed a melancholy one. The roads were crowded with thousands of families, driven from their homes in a state of utter destitution, and presenting images of squalid misery, never to be effaced from the memories of those who witnessed them. On these I shall not enlarge. They have often been described, and, I believe, never exaggerated ; and he who trusts to his imagination for a picture of the miseries of war, need scarcely fear, however dark his colouring, that, his limning will exceed the truth.

I believe it was on the 9th of October, that we reached Alhandra, a village on the Tagus, which formed the extreme right of the line we were about to occupy. On the night of our arrival, one of those events occurred, which, in the eyes of foreigners, contribute more than any other, to affix a tarnish on the character of our arms. By some culpable negligence, the wine, of which the town contained a great quantity, had not been destroyed ; the soldiers broke into the cellars, and a scene of unparalleled drunkenness ensued. It was a truly fortunate circumstance that the enemy did not attack us on

that night, or on the following morning. Had they done so, I am convinced there would not have been found, in the second division, a thousand men capable of bearing arms. The possession of Alhandra, would have afforded the means of turning our position, and the war in Portugal, might thus have been brought to a sudden, and abrupt conclusion.

On the morning after our arrival, General Stewart harangued the men on the parade, and drum-head court-martials being instantly assembled, several severe, but, in the circumstances, not unnecessary punishments, were inflicted.

By the arrival of some French prisoners, we learned that a pretty severe rencontre, between our cavalry and that of the enemy, had taken place that morning at day-dawn. A trumpeter of the 13th bore at his saddle-bow, the *spolia opima* of a French officer, whom he had cut down in the charge. I examined the helmet, which was of brass, and found that it had literally been divided in two. Such a blow was not unworthy the arm of Roland the Paladin,

or the most stalwart knight of the Round Table of our own King Arthur.

As night set in, the drum beat to arms, and we were unexpectedly ordered to march. The rain fell in torrents, and the darkness was extreme. I know nothing of the direction in which we marched, but the roads were literally knee-deep, and we proceeded several hours before halting. The night was passed on the road. It was impossible to distinguish any object a yard off, and I and several of my companions remained seated till morning, at the foot of a rock, a projecting ledge of which afforded a slight shelter from the pelting of the storm. Thus on

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion, and the belly-pinched wolf,
Keep their fur dry,

did the division remain exposed to all the fury of the elements. Even the men's knapsacks were wet through, and the rain penetrating their cartouche-boxes, nine-tenths of their ammunition was destroyed.

The morning at length dawned, and the joyful order to advance, was sounded in our ears. A weary journey of two leagues, brought us to

a small village in the mountains, where we remained two days. Here better precautions were taken to prevent the repetition of the scene, which had taken place at Alhandra. Before the billets were issued to the soldiers, every house was examined, and the wine which they contained poured out into the streets. This work of destruction was carried on, amid the rueful looks of the natives, and the curses, not loud but deep, of the shivering soldiers.

Our next movement was to Bucellus, famous for the wine which bears its name. It is situated in a hollow, on one of the principal roads to Lisbon, a short distance in the rear of the second line of defence. The town, which is not a large one, was crowded with soldiers, and was the station appointed for two brigades of infantry, and one of cavalry. Here the chances of the service threw me again in contact with my friend Conyers, now a captain of dragoons. Those who have never met a friend of their youth in similar circumstances, know nothing of the glow of feeling which such a meeting excites. In seasons of danger, the heart is peculiarly open, to the impressions of old-re-

membered friendships. The mind delights to turn from present difficulty and privation, to those who were associated with our former happiness, whose voice recalls to our memory the dream of former days. Conyers was delighted to see me ; for he, of course, knew I had been taken prisoner, but had not heard of my escape. Seated at evening, over our canteen of wretched *Ordinaire*, we told the story of our lives, since we had last parted. I learned, that at the time of our capture he had escaped, at the expense of a slight wound, by charging boldly forward, and trusting afterwards to the speed and mettle of his horse. Nor did we fail, while we laughed at his eccentricities, to crush a wine-cup to the health of the old Scotch Captain, who had been our leader on that occasion, and who was now paying the penalty of his generalship at Verdun.

Another goblet, and it was a bumper, was crowned to the health of my worthy uncle ; nor was even Girzy unremembered in our potations. Then rose the memory of those days of youthful hope, when, with panting hearts, we had longed for that moment, when our feet would

be free to follow the career of pride and honour, for which we felt ourselves to be destined. The hopes of neither of us had been blighted by fortune. The path we panted to pursue we had since trod. Yet we felt that our boyish aspirations were yet unfulfilled, and, too probably, were ever destined to remain so.

Conyers stayed but a few days at Bucellus, nor did we remain much longer. The brigade went into camp about a league in advance, from which, after a sojourn of about ten days, our regiment was ordered to occupy the Quinta de Cunha, a large and solitary chateau among the hills. It was fortified with a few pieces of light artillery. Embrasures were cut in the walls for the action of musquetry; and protected as it was by the surrounding batteries, the Quinta might be considered a place of some strength. Owing to the severity of the duty to which we had hitherto been exposed, I had been seized, before quitting the camp, with an attack of ague. This was so violent, as to render me, for some time, unfit for duty. From a Quotidian, however, it gradually subsided to a Tertian; and though considerably enfeebled by its continuance, I was

enabled once more, to play my humble part in the great game of war.

During the weeks that we remained thus stationed, nothing memorable occurred. Yes, there was one occurrence, the relation of which may perhaps serve to diversify a little the monotonous tissue, of this portion of my memoirs.

The gallant conduct of the Portuguese troops at the battle of Busaco, had induced the ministry, to confer on Marshal Beresford the Order of the Bath. The occasion of his investment with the insignia, Lord Wellington determined to celebrate by a grand party, and an invitation to all the officers of the army, who should be off duty on the appointed day, was inserted in the General Orders.

Although our Quinta was fully twenty miles distant, from Mafra, which was to be the scene of the destined festivity, my friend Popham and myself determined to relieve the dulness of our mode of life, by accepting the invitation. At daylight, we set forward on our way, and after riding for many hours, on the most villainous roads that were ever trod by the foot of either man or horse, sometimes ascending to

the mountain-tops, and at others sinking to the very bottom of the valleys, about two o'clock we reached the palace of Mafra. On inquiry, we found there was neither stabling nor forage for our horses; but observing some ruinous and deserted cottages at a short distance, we selected the most weather-proof for a stable, and returned to the palace.

We were ushered through a handsome suite of apartments into a splendid saloon, which we found already filled by a large and miscellaneous assemblage. There, were generals in their stars and ribands, and their staff, all tags and embroidery; and there, too, was the humble subaltern of a marching regiment, his coat the colour of brick-dust, and patched at the elbows, staring about him, as if in wonder how the devil he got into such company. There, too, were Portuguese generals and officers of the higher ranks, some with gold keys on their pocket-flaps, parading the apartment with an air of self-complacent dignity, and grinning their little compliments, whenever "*El grande Lord*" happened to approach them. The party altogether amounted to between two and three hundred;

and considering the circumstances under which it assembled, struck me on my entrance as forming rather a brilliant *coup d'œil*.

Of course, the principal object in the group, "the observed of all observers," was Lord Wellington. There was no assumption of state or dignity in his demeanour. He wore the uniform of his rank, with the star and riband of the Bath, and laughed and talked with those around him, in a tone of freedom and familiarity, which showed his disregard of all ceremony and punctilio.

We had been there about an hour before the grand ceremony of the day commenced. There was nothing about it remarkably imposing. Marshal Beresford advanced, supported by Sir Brent Spencer, and Sir Rowland Hill, and kneeling down, the ceremony of installation was performed, with all due pomp and solemnity. This done, the Neophyte shook hands with his brothers of the Order, and received the congratulations of the company, on the acquisition of his new honours.

But however august the spectacle might have been, I believe the majority of the party were

in little humour to enjoy it. My own appetite had been excited to an unpleasant degree, by a ride of twenty miles, over a mountainous country; and Sir William Curtis himself never looked to the hour of dinner with more anxious anticipation. Our fare, indeed, had recently consisted of the common rations of the army, there being no market from which it was possible to derive any additional supply. The prospect of this day's dinner, therefore, rose before us like a green oasis in the desert, a star in the surrounding darkness, on which the fancy loved to linger.

Never did lover pant more ardently for the hour of meeting with his mistress, than did the hungry crowd assembled at Mafra, for the annunciation of dinner. "Time and the hour," as the old proverb hath it, "wear out the longest day;" and our ears were at length greeted by the anxiously expected sounds. The more distinguished portion of the guests "paced forth into the hall," in the due order of their rank and seniority in the service, and were followed by the *profanum vulgus*, whose order of advance was regulated by the no less intelligible princi-

ple, of "Devil take the hindmost." The reader may conceive our consternation, when, having with difficulty, obtained entrance into the crowded *salle-à-manger*, it was evident that the table would not contain one tithe of the company, and we heard it announced, that dinner was provided only for the general officers.

Never was blank discomfiture more forcibly depicted, than in the countenances of the disappointed guests. They suffered the agonies of Tantalus. A splendid dinner was before them, yet with the savoury fumes of the viands in their nostrils, the sentence of famine had gone forth against them. As the unwelcome sounds met their ear, a murmur of anger and disappointment ran through the assembly. No dinner ! exclaimed an hundred voices, in accents of indignant astonishment. No dinner, was pensively echoed by an hundred more.

The doctrine of passive obedience, however, was by no means exemplified in the conduct of the excluded guests. Some by dint of impudence, still endeavoured to secure places at the table, and others gazed around, in hopes of an opportunity of securing unobserved some portion of

the spoil. An officer of the Buffs was detected in the act of taking improper liberties with a turkey, and another arrested in his attempt to escape with a Giblet-pie. Decisive measures were evidently become necessary, and the generals appeared perfectly aware, that their generalship was never more emphatically called for, than on the present occasion. Orders for our instant departure, were loudly vociferated, but without effect, and the dinner would certainly have speedily disappeared from the board, but for the opportune arrival, of a party of the 79th Highlanders who had been introduced by General Cameron, and proceeded by his directions, to expel us from the apartment, at the point of the bayonet.

When the process of summary ejectment had been completed, by this unusual act of hospitality, we returned to the saloon, where we were regaled with music by the fine band of the Guards. Great as the power of music is admitted to be, its soothing influence certainly did not extend, to the mitigation of that complaint under which we all so vehemently suffered, and

never did sweet sounds, fail more completely of their effect.

There is a certain brotherhood and free-masonry in misfortune; we felt ourselves linked together by one common calamity, and stranger addressing stranger, poured forth the most unmeasured expressions of anger and invective, on the subject of their common wrongs.

While thus employed, an aide-de-camp of Lord Wellington entered the apartment, and apologizing for the disappointment under which we suffered, announced, by way of consolation, that supper would be provided for the whole party. The reaction of feeling excited by the simple enunciation of the word *supper*, was really a psychological phenomenon. The brows that had been knitted closely together, suddenly expanded, and dull, heavy, and spiritless eyes, were once more lighted up with the sparkle of animation. There were even smiles in company, though these were few, and the approximation to a growl in the tone of our conversation, was now certainly less remarkable than before.

But the balmy impression, even of this welcome intelligence, soon very sensibly diminish-

ed. Ten o'clock was the hour of supper, and we knew from the consentaneous information of an hundred watches, that four dreary hours, had yet to elapse, before the advent of that blessed consummation. During these long hours, we were still destined to receive internal evidence, of nature's cordial abhorrence of a vacuum. For nearly half that period, indeed, we stood wedged together in one solid mass at the door of the supper-room, waiting to burst in like a torrent, whenever it should be opened. Opened it was at length ; but on entering the apartment I found to my inexpressible dismay, that those before me, had swept every dish away from the bottom of the table, leaving nothing in the shape of an esculent, for those who followed. I shall not attempt to describe the scene of wrangling and confusion which ensued. Those who have seen a whole squadron of half-starved dogs, snarling, quarrelling, and fighting for a single bone, may conceive something of its character. At first, poor Popham and myself were in despair. But instant action was necessary, and we set out foraging in different directions, agree-

ing to return and share together, the produce of our exertions.

With great difficulty, and a large bribe to one of the servants, I at length procured a bottle of Madeira, and found Popham had been equally successful, in obtaining a loaf of bread. On this we supped, and afterwards retired to our appointed dormitory, which was in an uninhabited wing of the mansion. There, wrapt in our boat-cloaks, we passed the night on the floor, and with the dawn of day, mounted our unfed horses to return to our cantonments.

CHAPTER VI.

Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
Unpruned dies. Her hedges even pleacht,
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,
Put forth disordered twigs. Her fallow leas,
The Darnel, Hemlock, and rank Fumitory
Doth root upon ; while that the coulter rusts,
That should deracinate such savagery.

Henry V.

ABOUT the middle of November, Massena broke up from his cantonments, and retired. The English army advanced instantly in pursuit. During the day of our first march, the rain fell heavily, and without intermission, and our route lay, through villages desolate and deserted. It was not till long after dark, that we arrived at Villa Nova where we halted for the night.

The filth and brutality of the French army, can only be conceived by those, who saw as we did, the state of the villages they had occupied. There was something revolting and even de-

grading to human nature in the extreme uncleanness of the dwellings, they had just quitted. In the village, where we were now to take up our quarters, there was not a door or window remaining, and we were left to grope our way, into any house we might think proper to occupy. Our baggage, owing to the badness of the roads, was still far in the rear; it was therefore impossible to procure any refreshment, and the night was one of almost impenetrable darkness. In selecting quarters under such circumstances, there was only one of our senses which could assist in guiding our choice, and after a *nasal* reconnoissance, I at length fixed on my residence for the night. I groped my way into a room, at one end of which there was a heap of dry straw, and tying up my horse at the other, I cast myself upon it, cold, wet, and weary as I was, to rest till morning.

Sleep, that

——— upon the high and giddy mast,
Seals up the ship boy's eyes, and rocks his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,

seldom withholds his anodyne from the tired soldier. I never enjoyed deeper or more tranquil slumber than on that night.

When I awoke in the morning, my servant (though by what means he had found me out, I know not) stood beside me, with a countenance on which horror was strongly depicted. As I knew him to be a blockhead, I did not at first think it necessary, to inquire into the cause of his emotion, but desired him to lay out my dressing things, and provide water for my toilet. Still he did not move, and I more peremptorily repeated my orders.

“For the love of God,” at length ejaculated the booby, “does your honour know what sort of bed you’re lying on?”

“No,” I answered, “but I find it a very comfortable one. But no talk—execute my orders instantly.”

“Your honour’s lying,” he exclaimed, “on a heap of dead men!”

He had no sooner uttered the words than I sprang to my feet, and found to my horror and consternation, that his assertion was true. An arm and a livid hand at one part protruded from the straw, and a griesly head was visible at another. After making this discovery, I remained not another moment in the house, but

ran out into the street, determined to enter it no more.

On my departure, an examination took place, and it was discovered, that I had slept on the bodies of nine dead Frenchmen, which were covered by the straw. As these men had died a natural death, some of them probably of contagious disorders, I was not at first without some dread of infection. But my apprehensions were soon forgotten, and no bad consequences ensued.

On our arrival at Villa Nova, we had expected to march again, on the following morning. But in this we were deceived. The morning passed, and we received no order to proceed, nor did we move from our quarters till the day following. While we remained there, a circumstance occurred, which showed how little, even Lord Wellington was at that time aware, of the plans of the French General.

I was standing engaged in conversation with some other officers, in the street, when Lord Wellington, accompanied by Sir Brent Spencer and a numerous suite, rode past. The cavalcade stopped within a yard or two of us, and I dis-

tinctly heard him, deliver the following order, to the Adjutant-General.

“You will write to Admiral Berkely, and tell him that my advanced-guard are to-night within a league of Santarem, and they will enter it early to-morrow morning.”

It was undoubtedly true, that the advanced-guard of the army, were that night within a league of Santarem, but nearly *four months* elapsed, before they entered it. In fact, next day it was generally known, that Massena had established his army in a strong elevated position, of which Santarem formed the right, and which he had been some weeks engaged in fortifying, by numerous batteries and redoubts. This occasioned a change in the destination of the second division, which was directed to cross immediately to the south bank of the Tagus. For this purpose, men-of-war's boats, had been brought up the river from Lisbon, and the passage was effected, with little delay, and no difficulty.

The dismal scene of desolation, on which we had lately been compelled to gaze, was now changed for one more pleasing and cheerful.

This part of Portugal, had comparatively suffered nothing of the evils of war. It had been invaded by no hostile army, and the husbandman had, undisturbed, pursued his peaceful occupation, reaping where he had sown. Here all was peaceful and quiet, and the war, which had for years agitated their unhappy country, had been to the natives of the Alentejo rather a rumour than a reality. They witnessed now, for the first time, the presence of a foreign armed force; and soldiers who spoke a different language, and professed a different religion from their own, became peaceful inmates, of their domestic circles.

It was evident, from the labour he had bestowed in strengthening it, that Massena contemplated more than a transient occupation, of his position at Santarem. Our division, therefore, went into quarters for the winter, in a series of small towns and villages, which, within the space of a few leagues, bordered upon the Tagus. General Houghton's brigade, of which the ——— formed a part, were stationed at Chamusca, where Sir Rowland Hill established his head-quarters. Here we led an easy

and a pleasant life. The inhabitants were kind and hospitable; the army sutlers brought copious supplies of all the comforts, and even luxuries, we could desire, and the toils and dangers of war, were for a time forgotten.

Near Chamusca, the Tagus was scarcely broader, than the Thames at Richmond. On our side, it was guarded by the Portuguese Ordenenza, for whom huts were erected at convenient distances. It was a favourite morning amusement for the British officers, to ride down to the banks of the river, and hold parley with the French, who came for a similar purpose to the opposite margin. In these dialogues, offence had been taken, probably at some national reflections, and the meetings in question at length came to assume a more hostile form. The daily routine was as follows :—A Frenchman would advance close to the river, while an English officer, taking the musquet of the neighbouring sentry, deliberately took aim at him and fired. The Englishman, after waiting to receive the fire of his antagonist, then yielded his place to some other competitor for the honours of the *duellum*. This sort of contest was idle and ab-

surd enough, and on reaching the ears of General Hill, was very judiciously put a stop to.

On the 6th of March, intelligence was received, that the enemy had evacuated his position on the preceding night, and was in full retreat. Our brigade received instant orders to cross the Tagus, and join the pursuing army.

Once more we entered upon scenes which displayed the ravages of war, in all their darkness and atrocity. Never was a country more completely devastated, than that through which we now passed. Not a blade of grass—nothing that could afford food either to men or animals, remained. It was evident, that the impossibility of longer procuring the supplies, necessary for so large an army, had been the cause of the retreat of Massena. We pursued him closely; and though our brigade formed, in fact, the rear of the British army, the enemy were evidently but a few leagues in advance, and we halted for several days successively, on the very ground they had occupied, on the preceding night.

The road along which we travelled, indeed, afforded abundant proof of the cruel necessities, to which the French army had been reduced.

It was literally strewed, with the carcasses of mules and horses, which had fallen on the march, from famine or fatigue. From many of these, the French soldiers, as they passed, had cut large slices of the flesh; an expedient for satisfying hunger, to which its extreme pressure, could alone have induced them to resort. Even the sight of human bodies, left to rot unburied by the road, or form the repast of the region kites, was not wanting, to complete the dismal character of the scene. Some of these were the bodies of French soldiers, who had sunk exhausted by disease or famine, and had been left by the rapacity of their comrades to perish naked and miserably. But by far the greater number, were those of Portuguese, who had fallen victims, to the gratuitous barbarity, of the invaders. Many of these were shockingly mutilated, some were hanging from trees, others had been run through the body by the bayonet.

The fourth day's march brought us to Thomar, a town of considerable magnitude, and the seat of an episcopal see. Here a portion of the French army had likewise been stationed, and they had left similar proofs of their occupancy,

to those, I have already mentioned. Here, too, I was witness of a scene, which has left an ineffaceable impression on my memory.

We had marched before daylight, and about noon we reached Thomar. An hour or two after our arrival, I found I had been unfortunate in the quarters I had chosen, and went out, in hopes of being able to provide myself, with a better lodging. In passing through the streets, my notice was attracted by a large convent, which I entered, in order to ascertain what sort of accommodation it afforded. The gate opened into a large court-yard, from the other extremity of which, ascended a stair, which led into a range of cloisters. I passed through these, and suddenly found myself in a large gallery, which, it was apparent, had been used by the French as an hospital. Most striking and terrible, indeed, was the sight which my eye then encountered. Round the apartment, some stretched on wretched truckle-beds, some on a little dirty straw upon the floor, lay about fifty dead soldiers. Each was in the attitude, in which he had expired. On some, death seemed to have fallen like a tranquil sleep; in others, the strug-

gle with the death-agony had evidently been strong, from the frightful contortion of limb and feature, into which they had been thrown. One man sat bolt-upright against the wall, and the hideous expression of his countenance rises at this moment before me, as the words flow from my pen. Never, never shall I forget it. There was something so striking to the imagination in the scene, terrible as it was, that I could not immediately quit it. I walked slowly round the gallery, gazing with a sort of awful fear on the objects as they successively presented themselves—then the spell was broken, and by a sudden impulse of horror, rushing hastily down the stair, I quitted the mansion of death, scarcely venturing to breathe, till I found myself once more beyond its dismal precincts.*

Some indication of a change in the intentions of the enemy, was the occasion of our halting

* I once communicated this occurrence, to a writer of distinguished genius, who has since made it the ground-work of a paper, of singular interest and power, which appeared in one of the periodical publications of the day. The facts were simply as above stated; the brilliant colouring, and striking accessories, with which he invested them, were the additions of his own fine imagination.

a day at Thomar. Early in the following morning, we were again in pursuit. The spectacle of mortality which the roads exhibited, seemed to deepen as we advanced, and our marches became longer, and more severe. Since we commenced our advance, no engagement had yet taken place between the retreating and pursuing armies. But on the third day's march after leaving Thomar, the distant roar of cannon and volleys of musquetry were heard, which became evidently louder and more frequent, as we advanced. An aide-de-camp of Marshal Beresford shortly after came, riding at full speed from the front, with orders to General Houghton to advance as rapidly as possible, with his brigade. The order was instantly obeyed, and we hurried on, with all possible speed, towards the scene of action. As we proceeded, I remember passing a village, which had that morning been the theatre of an engagement, between our light troops, and a party of the rear-guard of the enemy. The appearance of a British force had been wholly unexpected, and, on their approach, the French soldiers were seen running forth, from the houses of the village, in great

confusion. They were instantly fired on, and charged by the English, and among the number killed, was the commander of the party, a colonel in the French service. As we passed, his body lay naked on the road. He was a young man, with a countenance, even in death, handsome. The orifice of a bullet, which had passed through his body, was visible on his chest. I looked steadfastly on his face as we passed, and read, or thought I read there, that he was a man of high birth and breeding, brave, gifted, and accomplished. The hope—the only surviving one, perhaps, of some fond and anxious mother,—the beloved of some fair maiden in his own beautiful land, who would now vainly, and in sickness of heart, expect his return. Yet here he lay, an outcast in the public road, his body soiled, spit upon, and trampled by the feet of vulgar men.

The firing, which had intermitted for a brief space, was again renewed, before we arrived at Redinha. There we halted in rear of an eminence, over which the road led, and remained in readiness to bear a part in the action, should our services be required. This, however, was

not the case. The firing gradually became slacker, and more distant, and it was evident the enemy were again in full retreat. I rode to the top of the ridge in our front, in hopes to catch a glimpse of the French army. I succeeded, but the glimpse was a distant one, as they were in march along the side of a hill about a league off. The action had been fought, in order to cover the passage of their army, across the Soure. Their purpose having been effected, they instantly destroyed the bridge, and continued their retreat. Our brigade halted that night on the field of battle, which was covered by the dying and the dead.

Never was greater generalship displayed than by Massena, in the conduct of this memorable retreat. Retreating under every disadvantage, unable to collect more than ten days' provisions for his army, and consequently debarred from risking the chances of an engagement, and closely pursued by the British army, he made no sacrifice, either of baggage or artillery, and reached the frontier of Portugal with an army, which, though it had suffered much from fa-

mine and privation, had, in fact, lost nothing, from hostile attack. The only place, where Lord Wellington was enabled to bring his army into collision with the enemy, was at Redinha. There a partial engagement took place with the rear, while the main body were employed in passing the river, but from that time forward, his retreat was unmolested.

This praise is of course confined to his retreat. The conduct of Massena in the preceding campaign, was certainly not marked by great military talents, and in strategy, he decidedly showed himself throughout, inferior to his great antagonist. His policy manifestly was, to have immediately attacked the lines of Torres Vedras. Had he done so, with his vast superiority of force, there was at least a strong probability of success. In the attempt, he would undoubtedly have sacrificed a large portion of his army, but certainly not more, than afterwards fell inglorious victims to famine and disease, from his wintering in the very heart of a country, which he must, or should have known, was unable to furnish supplies, for so large an army. But these are matters, on which it

would ill become me, to offer more than a very diffident opinion ; if, indeed, to do even this, be not to diverge too widely from the narrow walk of personal adventure, to which I have hitherto been studious to confine my steps.

On the following day, we continued our advance, and after a march of five leagues, again bivouacked for the night. Thirty thousand of the British army, were here collected within the space of a mile. No sight, I think, can be more picturesque, than the encampment of a large army by night. The blazing fires—the shadowy figures moving in the red and flickering light,—the busy hum of a thousand voices, with which the wind is loaded on its passage, lost for a moment in the sound of the bugle or the trumpet, but again heard in its intervals,—these, independent of the associations to which they are naturally linked, form an aggregate of sight and sound, striking when present, and when past, not to be forgotten.

This was our last night with the army. Lord Wellington, in the course of it, received intelligence, that Soult was advancing against Bada-

jos, intending by that route, to enter the Alentejo; and General Houghton received orders, on the following morning, to retrace his steps, and crossing the Tagus, once more to unite his brigade, to the second division, which had not joined in the pursuit.

Our march back, was doubly dreary and disagreeable. In advancing, we had the stimulus of a flying enemy, the chances of a battle, the hope of victory, all floating before us. But on our return, the excitement had ceased, and even the soldiers in the ranks, seemed dull and spiritless. The carcases which lay along the road, had, since we formerly passed, become putrid, and we breathed an atmosphere, tainted, and redolent of corruption. The raven and the vulture, had been busy with their prey; the kites hovered over us in the air, and the eagle poised himself high up among the clouds, waiting only for our departure, to return and finish the repast, in which he had been interrupted. If we were formerly awe-struck, by the bare perception of mortality, what were our feelings, in thus beholding mortality, invested with all those hateful

and disgusting concomitants, from the sight of which, nature shudderingly recoils.

I remember nothing of note, connected with our march back to the Alentejo. On the 18th we crossed Zézere, at Punheté, and reached Abrantes on the 20th, where a bridge of boats had been established across the Tagus. On the 21st, we joined our division, which we learned had only been prevented by our absence, from commencing active operations against the enemy. It was known that Badajos had surrendered without a siege, owing either to treachery or cowardice, and that the enemy had likewise obtained possession of Campo Mayor, a town, of which the works were in too dilapidated a state to be capable of any effective resistance.

Sir Rowland Hill having, to the regret of the army, been obliged to return to England for the recovery of his health, the command of the second division, at this important juncture, when it was about to play a distinguished part in the war, had devolved on Marshal Beresford. The fatiguing marches which our brigade had lately undergone, rendered it necessary that

before the commencement of operations on the south side of the Tagus, they should be recruited by a halt. We rested for two days in the neighbourhood of Arronches, and on the 23d, commenced our advance towards Badajos.

It was evident, from the slowness and caution with which we proceeded, that Beresford had no very accurate intelligence with regard to the enemy's movements. We advanced, when the nature of the country seemed to require it, with the skirmishers extended on our flanks, and the cavalry in front, engaged in what is called "feeling the way."

For the first few days of our march, we proceeded without any intelligence of the French army, and we observed, in the appearance of the country, no marks of their having penetrated "thus far into the bowels of the land." On the 26th, however, a party of cavalry were observed on an eminence at some distance, over which our route lay, who, after reconnoitring us, instantly disappeared. The front of the division immediately halted until the rear had come up, and our advance was then cautiously continued, with the cavalry and light infantry in front.

When the infantry passed the height on which the enemy had been observed, the appearance of a few prisoners of the French cavalry, whom a party of the Thirteenth were conducting to the rear, and several wounded men who lay bleeding by the road, gave us the first intelligence that a collision had taken place. We now advanced as rapidly as possible, and the road commanded a view of Campo Mayor, which lay about half a league distant, in the plain before us. The French, who had apparently just received intelligence of our approach, were seen running from the town, and forming hastily on the plain, in order of retreat, protected by their cavalry in the rear.

Never did any army profit more by superiority of tactic, than did the French on the present occasion. They certainly amounted to not more than three thousand, and were commanded by General Latour Mauberg. The road from Campo Mayor to Badajos, which is about three leagues distant, lies over a flat and sandy plain. We enjoyed, therefore, in our advance, a perfect view of the operations in front. The thirteenth

Light Dragoons made a most gallant charge on the enemy's cavalry, and drove them back on their infantry, which halted, formed rapidly in square, and firing a volley in turn, forced their assailants to retire. Their cavalry having again formed, returned once more to the rear, and the infantry resumed its march. This fine manœuvre was frequently repeated, our cavalry displaying and maintaining an evident superiority over that of the enemy, but unable to derive from it any material advantage. One charge, I remember, was made by the Portuguese, who were emulous of sharing the honours of the day. The issue, however, was not precisely that which I have described as following the attacks of the British. They rode on most gallantly, till they came within pistol-shot of the enemy, who knowing, apparently, with whom they had to deal, spurred on to meet them, when the Portuguese, without waiting for the "tug of war," retreated with even more rapidity than they had advanced. It is, indeed, a curious fact, for which I shall not pretend to account, that though the Portuguese infantry behaved on many occasions

with great gallantry, both charging and defeating the enemy, this distinction was by no means predicable of their cavalry.

In this manner the French continued their retreat, and reached Badajos, without sustaining any considerable loss. Certainly all the honours of the day were theirs. In the face of an army of five times their number, they effected their retreat without suffering any loss, either of baggage or guns, and I believe we did not, on the whole, make twenty prisoners. The fact was, that even our heavy cavalry were never engaged, and the infantry, during the whole day, did not fire a shot. This specimen of Marshal Beresford's talents as a general, certainly did not lead to any congratulation on our good fortune, in being placed under his command.

When the enemy were evidently fairly beyond our reach, we retrograded to Campo Mayor, where we halted for the night. We questioned the inhabitants with regard to their treatment by the French, and found the conduct of the enemy on this side of the Tagus, had been less marked by atrocity than on the other.

On the following day, we marched to Elvas, certainly the strongest and best fortified city in Portugal. Fort de Lippe, which stands on the summit of a high cone-shaped hill, is, I should think, nearly impregnable. It must be admitted as a practical proof of its strength, that after the English army had withdrawn from the Alentejo, and the place was defended only by a Portuguese garrison, Marshal Soult never even attempted to lay siege to it, although it is unquestionably the key to that province.

From Elvas we advanced to Borba, where we halted for a few days, while the engineers were engaged in constructing a bridge, by which we crossed the Guadiana. The stream is extremely rapid, though not broad, and the operation was found to be one of some difficulty. On the opposite bank of the Guadiana we remained encamped for some days. Here the whole country seemed covered with Gum Cistus, the fragrance of which was so strong as to be absolutely oppressive.

I remember one morning, when standing on our alarm-post, observing some soldiers of the thirteenth Light Dragoons approaching the

camp, covered with blood, and severely wounded. We soon learned that an Out Piquet belonging to that regiment had been surprised in the night, and taken prisoners by the enemy. With a want of caution certainly censurable, they had unsaddled their horses, and the French, who, in their advance, had contrived to elude the observation of our videttes and outposts, left them, by the suddenness of their attack, no time for preparation. The officer in command was taken prisoner, and the lieutenant had only escaped by throwing himself on his horse like a second Mazeppa, without either saddle or bridle, and leaving the direction of his flight to the choice of the animal.

Not satisfied, however, with this successful *coup de main*, the enemy rode forward even to the village in which Marshal Beresford had his head-quarters, and breaking open his house, the Marshal only escaped capture by leaping out of a back window in his shirt and cocked hat, and, in this uncomfortable trim, making the best of his way across the fields to the camp, where the unexpected and grotesque appearance

of their commander was beheld with merriment and wonder by the troops.

Quitting this station, we marched towards Olivença, a fortified town, in which the French had left a garrison. On being summoned, the governor refused to surrender, and the rest of the army continuing its advance, General Cole and his division were left to conduct the siege. On the following night, we slept at Albuera, yet a bloodless field, and not destitute of a wild and romantic beauty. The ground was prettily variegated by little ranges of hills, and a bright and peaceful stream murmured on its way through banks clothed with woods. It was a quiet and pastoral scene, such as one might look for, rather amid the green mountains of Scotland, than where we found it.

The heavy battering train had not yet arrived from Lisbon, and this circumstance occasioned a considerable delay in our operations. It was impossible to begin the siege of Badajos without it; and, in the meantime, the army was cantoned in villages a few leagues in front, covering all the roads by which Soult could possibly advance

to the relief of the city. Our station was a town called Almandrelejo, about six leagues within the Spanish frontier. Thither we accordingly marched, and remained there about a month.

CHAPTER VII.

Count. Brother John Bates, is not that the morning which breaks yonder ?

Bates. I think it be ; but we have no great cause to desire the approach of day.

Will. We see yonder the beginning of the day, but I think we shall never see the end of it. Who goes there ?

Henry V.

I HAVE not interrupted the details of the military events, with which the story of my life is naturally linked, by allusion to incidents, which, although they materially affected my own happiness, had nothing in common with the character of the narrative in which I have been recently engaged. I would take advantage, therefore, of the interval of peaceful occupation which we enjoyed in our new quarters, to supply the blank which has been thus occasioned.

It has been said, that absence subdues passion. I have never found it so. Never was she, to whom my troth was plighted, the object

of a love more fervent and engrossing, than when seas rolled between us, and the cloud of danger hung deepest and most loweringly in my horizon. Then, indeed, love became not a passion, but a madness, and reigned in my heart a single, solitary despot. Like the Rod of Aaron, it swallowed up all other sentiments and passions. The future contained but one object, for which I panted; the past, but one object of memory.

I had hitherto been fortunate. Every packet had brought letters from England, and such letters as would have cheered and consoled me under privations far greater, than any I had been yet called on to endure. My sisters were well, and Lady Melicent—still loved me. Dear and precious to me as the light of Heaven were those letters. The intelligence of the arrival of a packet brought with it a tumult of emotion. I calculated the course of the winds, by which the voyage might be shortened or prolonged, and prayed that the vessel, in which so many hopes were centered, might be wafted to her port with fair breezes, and on a summer sea.

I also wrote frequently. Often, when jaded

and overcome, my companions cast themselves on the ground to rest their wearied limbs, and forget in sleep their troubles and their dangers, did I seize the pen, and pour forth to my beautiful betrothed, all my hopes, my fears, and all my love. Never, never was her image absent from my thoughts. It went with me into battle,—it forsook me not in pain and suffering, and when beneath the cloudy canopy of Heaven, my head rested on its stony pillow, it mingled with the sweet slumbers that descended on my eyelids.

During our stay at Almandrelejo, for the first time since my arrival in Portugal, a packet came from England, and brought no letter from her I loved. A thousand fears came over me, and my fancy devised sad, though visionary causes for this unlooked-for silence. Was she not ill? Had not some dreadful misfortune happened? Might not she whom I adored be stretched, at that very moment, on a bed of sickness and suffering—the bloom faded from her cheek—the lustre gone from those eyes—those beautiful eyes, that, by a single glance had made my blood to gush onward like a cataract through

my tingling veins? My spirits were low, my heart anxious and depressed. Something,—I knew not what,—but something of evil omen to my happiness, had befallen, and my fears, though vague, were overpowering.

Such was the state of mind in which I opened the letters brought me by the packet. The superscription of the first I knew; it was from Frank Willoughby. He was in London. Since I quitted England, he had become an M. P., and his new duties demanded a residence of some months' duration in town. From this letter I derived at least a partial relief from the dark forebodings that oppressed me. Lady Melicent was well. Willoughby knew she had been the object of my admiration, though not of my love, for to no human ear had that holiest of secrets been confided; but he had often heard me speak enthusiastically of her charms, and he mentioned her in his letter as one of whom, far distant as I was, he imagined it would be agreeable to receive intelligence.

I learned that Lady Melicent too was in London, that she moved in the gayest circle of the metropolis, and was the star of first magnitude

in the hemisphere of fashion. When she appeared at the opera, the box in which she was seated, was that to which all eyes were turned. When she mingled in the dance, grace hovered round her, and she moved peerless and pre-eminent amid the circle of surrounding beauty.

She was, he said, the gayest of the gay, seen everywhere, and everywhere attracting homage. Lord Lyndhurst too was in town, and the world still considered him, as the affianced lover of the Lady Melicent.

Willoughby's letter told me all this, and had the immediate effect of relieving my mind from much of that burden of anxiety, under which it laboured. At first, something of a pang shot through my heart, and I was moved by a sort of vague jealousy, at the thought that Lady Melicent, during the absence of one whom she loved—whom she knew to be encompassed with perils in a distant land, should have felt equal to the prominent part she was then playing in the great theatre of fashion. Was that love, which in me was all pervading, all engrossing—which was the very anchor of my hope, nay, almost the condition of my being—was that love, which to me

was everything, to her so little—so very little, that her heart required other objects of interest and excitement, her mind other thoughts, than those which the memory of him who loved her could inspire?

Such thoughts and feelings disturbed me for a while, but not long. I soon brought myself to believe that the distinguished part she occupied in the world's eye, was the consequence not of choice but of necessity. How could Lady Melicent de Vere appear in society, without stepping forward into that high station, for which the gifts both of nature and fortune had evidently destined her. Whose veins bounded richer blood than Lady Melicent's? Who to so noble and extended an inheritance, united so rich a dowry of beauty, grace, and talent? How could she, the synthesis of attractions so rare and numerous, cease to become the cynosure of admiring eyes, unless by withdrawing altogether from that world which she adorned, to solitude and seclusion? Could I expect this? No. I had no right to claim or to expect so great a sacrifice; perhaps I scarcely wished it. I felt pride

in the idea, that she to whom my heart told me I was bound by indissoluble links, on whose faith I rested implicitly as on gospel truth, should thus stand forward to receive the guerdon of the world's homage and admiration. There was vanity in my thoughts, for I felt a reflected consequence and honour in the remembrance, that *I* was the man by whom the prize of this fair creature's love had been won.

While occupied in such reflections, a letter from Lucy lay before me unopened. From her I heard frequently, but from Jane, since I quitted England, I had only received one letter, and that was of a character rather to excite, than to allay apprehension on her account. It was evidently written under strong feelings of depression, but it breathed nothing of the language of complaint. She was ill, she said, very ill, and spoke of sufferings acute, but indescribable; a mortal sickness of the heart, for which there was no balm but death. "Pray for me, my dearest brother," she said; "pray that God, who in his mercy tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, may soon vouchsafe me this relief. Pray,

and your petition will be a kind one, that in this world we may never meet again."

There was in the tone of this letter an occasional wildness and incoherence, even more alarming than the intelligence it conveyed. In answer to it, I entreated her not to give way to that depression and despondency of spirit, which her letter betrayed, and assured her, should the conduct of her husband require her to throw herself on the protection of her family, she would find my heart and hand, ever warm and ready in her defence.

To these offers and assurances, she had made no reply, but the letter from Lucy, which I have already mentioned, left no room for doubt with regard to the nature and causes of poor Jane's illness. Till now, Lucy informed me, Jane, even to her, had maintained a strict reserve, with regard to the conduct of her husband, and the sources of her domestic disquiet. But the outrages of Hewson had at length exceeded even the bounds of Jane's patience and meekness of sufferance. The very worm, when trod on, will turn on its oppressor; and I knew that under any ordinary,—I had almost said any conceivable

aggression, Jane would have pined in secrecy—suffering, yet silent. The substance of what I learned was as follows :—

Hewson, though he had never been a kind husband, had at least, for some time after his marriage, treated his wife with some degree of consideration and respect. He probably felt proud of her elegance and attractions, and gratified by the admiration she excited when she appeared in public, he received the praises bestowed on her beauty, as an indirect compliment to his own taste. But the zest of this wore off with its novelty ; a man, palled like Hewson by a long course of licentiousness, could scarcely revert to the calm and peaceful enjoyments of domestic life. He required something more poignant and racy, than he found in the society of the simple and retiring Jane. He treated her first with neglect, then with harshness. He filled his house with rude and boisterous company, who with their filthy and abominable slang, offended her ears, and insulted her delicacy. Females, too, who having lost the reality, thought it scarcely worth while to retain even the semblance of virtue,—creatures

from whose profligate audacity she shrunk with loathing and disgust, were the companions, with whom her husband wished her to associate. But even these were not the limits of his brutality. He introduced into his house, a woman taken from the very lowest order of society, who was publicly known to be his mistress, and endeavoured, by a course of barbarous and inhuman treatment, to make his wife submit to the daily outrage of her presence.

But his tyranny and his cruelty were in vain. Jane, meek and submissive as she was, could not bend so low. She would not stoop from the dignity of her virtue, and her whole soul revolted from this most cold-blooded and cruel consummation of insult. In a state of despair, closely verging on insanity, she fled from his hated mansion, and sought the protection of Lady Willoughby. There did this wretch pursue her. There did he drag her from the arms of her sister, to become again the victim of his hellish outrage.

My own feelings, on receiving the letter which contained this intelligence, it would be impossible to describe. There was fury in my soul. I

was agitated by a tornado of conflicting emotions. One moment, I determined instantly to return to England,—to sacrifice my military rank, nay more, my honour, for the sake of inflicting instant and signal punishment on this cruel and cowardly assassin. Then, again, I shrank from my resolution. To return to England, a disgraced and dishonoured man, what was it but to baulk the very vengeance I contemplated,—to place myself on a level, in the eyes of the world, with the wretch I was about to punish,—to pluck out the sting from my revenge? I knew it would be fruitless,—and as we were then situated, almost disgraceful, to apply for leave of absence. Nine months had barely elapsed since I had joined the army; to have requested so soon to quit it again, in the very middle of my first campaign, I felt would be to subject my character to observations, which I could not brook.

Here, therefore, I was chained by fetters, in comparison with which, the strongest iron bonds were light and frangible, and from which I knew that no human power could set me free. But the fury of my passion was not diminished by

my consciousness of its present impotence. All benevolent and charitable sympathies were for a time dried up within me. What would I not have given at that moment to have struck the villain to the earth, to have seen him slowly expiring in long and lingering agonies, to have spit on him, as he faltered forth his vile spirit, and have watched the vultures as they made their unclean repast on his loathsome carcase!

Under the influence of such feelings, I seized the pen, and wrote to him as follows:—

“HEWSON,

“Think not that the hour of reckoning comes not, because it is delayed. I know your conduct to my sister, and if I live, as there is a God in heaven, you shall answer it in this world, as well as in the next.

“CYRIL THORNTON.”

As my reason slowly emerged from the cloud which the receipt of this melancholy intelligence had spread around it, I did not neglect to take such inadequate means as were in my power, for the immediate protection of my sister. I wrote to my solicitor in London, to employ

any legal measures that might be conducive to the object, of forcing Hewson to observe the common decencies of life, (from such a man I could not hope for more) towards his unhappy wife, and having done this, I had to endure the mortifying reflection that I had done *all*.

A life of danger and activity is unfavourable to the indulgence of grief. New objects and difficulties continually excite our attention, and call for exertion, and produce at least the fortunate effect, of diverting the mind from dwelling too long and unceasingly on hidden sorrows. A soldier cannot long abstract his thoughts from the world in which he moves. In him there are no slumbering energies, for his duty requires them all, to be in constant action. The part of *Il Penseroso* must be played by idler men. And so it was with me. My vows of vengeance slept, but they were not dead. Time might yet rouse them from their slumber.

We remained at Almandrelejo till the beginning of May, and Soult did not appear to disturb our repose. The army then returned to invest Badajoz, and the siege instantly commenced. We were encamped in an olive grove, about a

league from the town, where we lay completely concealed from the observation of the enemy.

On our part, though the duty was abundantly harassing to the troops, the siege was not very vigorously prosecuted. For some days, Marshal Beresford appeared undecided with regard to the point against which his first advances should be directed. Operations were repeatedly commenced on different sides of the town, and abandoned before any effective progress had been made. At length, however, he appeared to have finally arrived at a decision. The covered way was commenced, and batteries were erected, as the works proceeded nearer the town.

There was a small fort at some distance from the walls, which interrupted our progress, and which it therefore became necessary to storm. A party of two hundred men was appointed for this duty, under the command of a major, whose name I have forgotten. Next in command to this officer was my friend Popham; and having received from him information with regard to the arrangements, my curiosity made me anxious, if possible, to be a witness of the attack.

The hour at which the party were to be assembled in readiness, was eleven o'clock. Popham and myself were messmates, and before his departure, a bumper was crowned to his success, and we shook hands, in the uncertainty of ever meeting again.

Before the appointed hour, I had stolen alone through the darkness, to a neighbouring height, on which I stood, waiting with quickened pulses, for the issue of the impending conflict.

All external circumstances were in favour of the assailants. There was no moon abroad, and not a star twinkled in the murky sky. The enemy, however, were vigilant. Ever and anon, blazing fireballs rose from the town, illumining the heavens with an arch of brilliant flame, and when quenched, leaving the darkness more palpable than before. All was silent, save the sound of a distant drum, caught up by the night-breeze, as it swept over the ramparts of the leaguered city.

The road by which I knew our brave party must pass, wound round the base of the eminence, on which I stood. I had watched long and anxiously for the sound of their footsteps,

before it met my ear. There was deep silence in the ranks as they passed onward, and even the noise of their tread would have been inaudible, to an ear less tremblingly awake than mine. But in a minute the sound was gone, for they had already passed my station, and I knew they were fast approaching the scene of struggle. My heart beat quick in my bosom, as, with straining eyes, I endeavoured vainly to penetrate the darkness, and waited for the first signal of the attack having commenced. I knew the party were yet undiscovered by the enemy, for their fireballs had hitherto been fortunately thrown in a different direction, from that in which they were advancing.

At length, however, when they were already close to the fort, a fireball fell within a few yards of them, and for a few seconds they were visible, as distinctly as in the glare of the noon-day sun. All again was darkness. The sound of drums and bugles rung from the ramparts of the town, and a heavy fire of musquetry, mingled with the roar of artillery, was heard from the fort.

The excitement of my feelings at this mo-

ment, had reached the highest possible pitch, and I waited in awful suspense for the result. Another fireball came blazing like a comet through the air, and the English were seen scaling the walls of the fort, on which the enemy were visible, some hurrying to and fro, others firing down on their assailants, or thrusting at them with their bayonets, as they attempted to ascend. Again the scene was hid from my view.

By the light of a third fireball, as it ascended from the town, I observed the garrison were under arms, and already collected on the ramparts. It fell in the very middle of the fort, and there was my interest concentrated. Our brave fellows had already effected their entrance, and were mingled with the enemy. The contest was bayonet to bayonet, and I huzzaed and waved my hat in the darkness, for I then knew that our arms would be victorious. The next fireball showed my anticipations to have been correct; and a few of the enemy, who had escaped by springing from the walls of the fort, were retreating rapidly to the town.

So soon as the fort was observed to be in our

possession, a tremendous fire was opened on it from the ramparts. The shot and shells flew thickly, but the darkness was in our favour, and they occasioned little loss. The enemy did not attempt by a sortie, to deprive us of our conquest, and before morning, the guns of the fort had been carried off, and its walls levelled with the ground. The commander of the party was severely wounded, but Popham escaped unhurt; and most sincerely did I congratulate him, when we again met, on the issue of the truly gallant attack, of which I had been witness.

By the capture of the fort already mentioned, all external obstacle to the progress of the siege had been removed, and it was now carried on, more vigorously than before. Each brigade took it in turn to work by night in the trenches and harassing as the duty was, it brought with it a certain novelty and excitement, which made us unrepiningly submit to the labour it imposed. On the night of the 12th of May, our brigade was on duty. The Marshal's plans had apparently undergone some change, for we were ordered to break ground within point-blank dis-

tance of the walls, at a point considerably distant from that, on which the advances had hitherto been made. This was indeed a service of peril. Had we been discovered by the enemy, it was certain we should be swept off by his guns; to say nothing of the consequence to be apprehended from a sortie of the garrison, made on men who had laid aside their arms, and were busy with the shovel and the pickaxe.

Luckily for us, neither of these contingencies occurred. The night again was in our favour, for it was profoundly dark. The attention of the enemy was principally directed to the quarter, which had hitherto been the scene of our operations, and our advance was fortunately not detected. It was absolutely necessary, however, that we should be covered before break of day; and the soldiers, conscious that their own safety depended upon the progress of their labour, plied their toil unremittingly.

I was sent forward with a party of light infantry, to act as a corps of observation, and prevent surprise. The orders I received from General Hamilton, who commanded for the

night, were to advance as closely to the walls as possible ; to listen attentively for any indication of movement in the town ; and in case of observing the advance of any armed body, to dispatch a messenger to announce the intelligence to the general, and then, by opening our fire, to delay their progress as much as was compatible with our own safety.

In pursuance of these orders, we crept forward on all fours, till we came within fifty yards of the walls, where we lay flat on the ground, endeavouring to catch even the smallest sounds that floated in the air, and to penetrate the darkness with our gaze. The night was still, and favourable in all respects for our object. We heard the hours sounded by the clock of the great church in the city. The sentinel on the wall above us, in his solitary walk, whiled away the time in singing catches of a French song, which he interrupted to challenge the advancing officer on duty, as he passed along the rampart on his rounds. Again we heard the challenge of the sentinel, and the sound of approaching footsteps. It was the relief. Words of command were given, the

motion of arms heard, the very instructions of the new sentinel were distinctly audible; this passed; the party were again in motion, and the sound of their retiring footsteps was soon lost in the distance.

These are, perhaps, insignificant circumstances to relate; but to men in our situation they were full of interest. They gave rise to a far-extending train of fancies, which relieved the tedium of our long night-watch. There was something pleasing, too, in our thus becoming spies on the unconscious enemy,—in being so near as to hear their very whispers,—and to know that the smallest signal of our presence would call instantly to arms the sleeping garrison, and rouse the loud thunder of their artillery.

I had been directed to return, on observing the first streak of daylight; but while the darkness was yet unbroken, a messenger brought orders from the general for the instant return of the party. Marshal Beresford had become alarmed at the prospect of the destructive fire which could not fail to be opened on us by the besieged on the return of day; and abandoning

our works, after a night of fruitless labour, the brigade returned to the camp.

I was awakened from a sound sleep, into which I had fallen immediately on our return from the trenches, by the sergeant of my company, who brought orders which had just been issued from head-quarters, for the army to hold themselves in instant readiness to march. Intelligence of this sort is the best antisoporific in the world; and on that morning I slept no more. There were rumours in the camp, that Soult was advancing with a large army to the relief of Badajoz, and it was evident, from the order now issued, that these rumours were well-founded. On the following morning we raised the leaguer of the town, and marched to Valverdé, in the neighbourhood of which, we halted for the night. The whole army felt aware, that we were now on the eve of a battle, and the discontent, which the vacillation of our commander had caused to lower on every brow, quickly vanished in the prospect of terminating by a victory, our hitherto inglorious campaign. We encamped on the heights of Albuera on the 15th, in order of battle; and it was evident, that Marshal Beresford

intended here to await the approach of the enemy. The Spanish army, under Blake, arrived during the night, and occupied the right of the position; in the centre were the British, and the Portuguese were posted on the left.

Heavily rose the sun on the eventful morning of the 16th of May 1811. Dark volumes of clouds obscured his disk, and his rays lost more than half their brightness in penetrating the dense masses of vapour which on all sides overspread the horizon. We were under arms two hours before day-dawn, and thousands of eyes, which that morning watched his rising, were destined never to see him set. The morning, though still and dark, was not misty. Objects, even at a considerable distance, were distinctly visible. There was not wind to stir a leaf upon the smallest spray, and the scene before us, though gloomy, was peaceful. It was seven o'clock before we returned to our tents, and at that time no enemy was visible. Two of my brother-officers that morning shared my breakfast; and of the whole party, including the three servants who ministered to our wants,

I was, in the course of two hours, the only individual alive.

While we were at breakfast, a few shots were fired by our artillery, which did not at all influence our meal; but that concluded, my curiosity led me to advance a considerable distance in front of the line, to observe the motions of the enemy, who was reported to be fast approaching. The report was correct. Their advancing masses covered the road for several miles, and their cavalry, formed in column of squadrons on the plain, had already menaced an attack on the bridge of Albuera. Fast as their infantry came up, they halted in column on either side of the road, without indicating by any demonstration, what part of our position was about to become the chief object of their attack. I spent about half an hour,—it might be more, in thus gratifying my curiosity, and when I returned, the tents were struck, the baggage sent to the rear, and the whole army drawn up in line of battle.

The pain I felt at this sight was excruciating. To have been absent from my post at such a moment, when the sound of the artillery, which

had already opened on the advancing enemy, showed that the battle had even now begun, was to incur the possibility of an imputation, which I could brook no lips to utter. I ran madly to the rear, and found with some difficulty the place where my tent had stood. I was in dishabille, and it was necessary, on such an occasion, to appear in uniform. My coat, hat, and sash, had been left on the ground; but in the hurry, my sword had been removed with the baggage. I changed my dress as speedily as possible, casting from me those I wore, for plunder, either to our own soldiers, or those of the enemy, and having supplied the place of my own sword by that of a sergeant, I joined my regiment.

My old enemy, Colonel Penleaze, was not displeased, on the present occasion, to have an opportunity of venting his long-suppressed resentment.

“How does it happen, Captain Thornton,” he exclaimed in front of the battalion, “that when the regiment has, for the last half hour, been instantly expecting to be called into action, *you* were absent from your company?”

I was proceeding to answer this question, but he interrupted me.

“ Make no reply, sir, for your conduct admits of no excuse. *Nothing* can justify your absence from your duty, at a moment like the present. Had you been a minute later, sir, I should have sent you to the rear in arrest; and, as it is, I may yet possibly think it proper to report your conduct to the General.”

My blood boiled in my veins as he spoke, and had death been the consequence, I must have answered.

“ Colonel Penleaze, I am ready to account for my conduct anywhere, or in any manner, and shall repel, as becomes me, either in public or private, whatever charge you, or any man, shall dare to make, affecting my honour.”

Just at that moment a heavy firing commenced on our right, and the Adjutant-General rode up, with orders for our brigade instantly to advance.

In order to render the subsequent account of this, to me most eventful and memorable battle, more clear and intelligible, I shall here take

leave to say something of the relative situation of the hostile armies.

Our position was a chain of eminences, along the front of which flowed the river Albuera, a shallow stream, and in many places fordable. Through the centre of it ran the road to Badajoz and Valverde, crossing the river by a bridge, which Beresford evidently expected would have been the main object of the enemy's attack. To the left of the road lay the village of Albuera, apparently deserted, and in ruins. Near this was stationed our artillery. The enemy, however, merely menacing this point, crossed the river about a mile higher up, where its course was nearly at right angles with that which it subsequently took in front of our position. By this movement, our right flank, consisting of Blake's army, was laid completely open to attack, and instantly driving the Spaniards from the heights they occupied, Marshal Soult drew up his army in a commanding position, which completely raked the line of the allies: Thus an immediate change of front, on our part, became necessary; and the object to which our efforts were directed, of course, was to dis-

lodge the enemy from the very important heights of which he had already gained possession. In truth, on the success of these efforts depended the whole issue of the battle, for, if the French succeeded in maintaining *their* position, *ours* became untenable, and no resource was left but a retreat, which, situated as we then were, could not fail to be both disgraceful and calamitous.

Such were the circumstances in which both armies stood, when the order, which I have already mentioned, arrived for our brigade to march instantly to attack the enemy on the heights he occupied.

The morning, which had been overcast, "and heavily with clouds brought on the day," had now changed to one of storm and rain, so heavy, that less than forty days of it, would have sufficed for a second deluge; and it was, with every part of our apparel perfectly saturated with water, that we commenced our movement. The enemy soon opened on us a tremendous fire of artillery, which did considerable execution in the column, and dashed the earth in our faces, as we advanced. One cannon-ball struck close to my foot, and bounding

onwards with terrific velocity, passed through the body of the officer commanding the company immediately in rear of my own, and killed two soldiers in its further progress.

As we approached the spot, where the courage of both armies was about to be tested, a sight of the most dispiriting description presented itself, at some distance on our right. The first brigade, in the act of forming line, was charged by a large body of Polish lancers, and thus taken at a disadvantage, were thrown into disorder, which it was found impossible to retrieve. By this attack, nearly the whole of the Buffs, and second battalion of the forty-eighth, were made prisoners.

We had reached the bottom of the heights, which we were about to ascend, and for that purpose were deploying, by an echelon march, from column into line, when Sir William Stewart, the second in command, rode up to us at full speed. His appearance arrested my attention. The day, as I have already said, was cold and wet, but the perspiration stood in large drops on his forehead, and ran down his cheeks. He was always a man of martial appearance,

but at that moment particularly so. There was strong agitation visible in his countenance and manner, but there was a striking expression of high courage in his eye, and as he spoke, his utterance was quicker, and his voice more animated, than I had ever heard it. He addressed us as follows:—

“Men of the third brigade, you are about to fight for the honour of your country, and I am not afraid to tell you, that the fate of this army is in your hands. I have committed a great and unfortunate error with the first brigade, but I am sure you will repair all. You will crown the height, and then charge the enemy with the bayonet. Go on, my brave fellows, and may God bless you!”

To this inspiring address, the men answered by a loud and hearty cheer, and General Houghton, waving his hat, led the way up the side of the hill. On reaching its summit, we were instantly assailed by a dreadful fire, both of musquetry and artillery, and the men fell thickly in the ranks. For a moment, the line first wavered, and then recoiled for a pace or two, but General Houghton, again waving his

hat, spurred on to the front, and we advanced once more, in double-quick, to the charge.

The other regiments of the brigade, being in rear, had not yet taken up their position in the line, and we enjoyed the honour of leading them into action. As we advanced, I remember passing Marshal Beresford on the height. He was on foot, with no staff near him, and in a situation of extreme exposure; his look and air were those of a man perplexed and bewildered.

Our intention of charging the enemy was unfortunately defeated, by the intervention of a small ravine, on the opposite bank of which the French were stationed, and were enabled, by the acclivity on which they stood, to fire on us eight deep. It was on the edge of this ravine that we halted, and opened our fire. The carnage in our ranks was dreadful. General Houghton had been killed in the advance, and bullets flew like hailstones. I saw my friends and brother officers fall around me, and it seemed as if I bore a charmed life, and that I alone moved secure and scathless amid the surrounding havoc.

Such had been our situation for some time,

when the sergeant-major came to inform me, that the command of the regiment had devolved on me, all the officers senior in rank having been killed or wounded. In the rear I found the horse of the adjutant, who had been killed, and mounting him, I rode along the ranks, and saw that I had indeed succeeded to a melancholy command. We had taken upwards of seven hundred men into action, of whom not a third remained, and it was evident, if we continued much longer in our present situation, few even of those could expect to escape the fate of their companions.

The firing, which had somewhat slackened on the part of the enemy, had, from the exhaustion of ammunition, almost entirely ceased on ours, yet we had received no orders to retire. In this situation, a brigade of artillery was advanced to the front, and instantly opened their fire. It was charged by the French cavalry, and we had the mortification to observe the artillerymen driven from their posts, and the guns remain in possession of the enemy. The regiment were already retiring when this unfortunate event took place, but even destitute as we were of

ammunition, I determined to make an effort to recover the guns, thus disgracefully sacrificed, at the point of the bayonet. Once more we faced the enemy, and calling on the small remains of the regiment to follow me, I led the charge, trampling, as we advanced, on the bodies of our dead and dying companions. The charge was successful. The enemy were driven back, and the guns were once more in our possession.

The Fusileer brigade was seen at that moment advancing to our support, and everything seemed to indicate a happy termination of the contest. Before the arrival, however, of this seasonable reinforcement, we were charged by the Polish lancers, who had already done so much execution in the commencement of the action, supported by a heavy column of infantry. At this moment I received a shot in the body, but did not fall from my horse. I was immediately surrounded by the lancers, and remember receiving a dreadful sabre-cut on the face, and a pistol-shot in the left arm. I fell to the ground, and of what passed afterwards, my memory gives me no intelligence.

CHAPTER VIII.

She is my essence, and I leave to be,
If I be not by her fair influence
Foster'd, illumined, cherish'd, kept alive.

Cymbeline.

How like a younker or a prodigal
The skarfed bark puts from its native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind ;
How like a prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind !

Merchant of Venice.

My return to consciousness was accompanied by acute bodily suffering. I was in a tent, and the surgeon of the regiment, with one of his assistants, stood beside the pallet on which I lay. My feelings were those of a man on whom death had set his gripe. I gasped convulsively for breath, yet at every respiration, was nearly suffocated by the blood, which gurgled from my throat, and obstructed the action of my lungs. Had relief not been administered, it was impossible I could have survived many minutes. Fortunately, the surgeons, in examining my body,

found a small protuberance below my left shoulder, which they immediately opened ; the bullet and a mass of coagulated blood issued from the wound, and the dreadful feeling of suffocation was instantly relieved. The blood, which had hitherto flowed through my throat, now found another channel, and from that moment I date the full and unimpaired restoration of my senses.

The difficulty of breathing, that primary of the vital functions, had absorbed all other sense of suffering, and that removed, I awoke only to pain, of which I had hitherto been unconscious. Stimulated by their first success, and the slight hope which it held out of their skill being efficaciously exerted, the doctors proceeded to examine my other wounds more minutely, than in my apparently hopeless state, they had at first deemed necessary. This done, they consulted a few minutes apart, then Holford approached, and taking my hand, thus addressed me :—

“ Thornton,” he said, and I saw the tears rise to his eyes as he spoke, “ you are a man of courage, arm yourself with it.”

“ You mean to tell me my wounds are mortal. Speak, do not fear me.”

“ Not so. There are hopes of your recovery, and by God’s blessing, we shall have you once more among us. But an operation is necessary. You must lose your arm.”

“ And is this the only means of saving my life ?”

He answered, in a low but decided tone of voice, pressing my hand between both of his—
“ In our judgment it is.”

On receiving this intelligence, I at first made no answer, but closing my eyes, endeavoured to collect my energies for the scene of sufferance, through which it was necessary I should pass. To do so, was no easy task. Weakened as I was by loss of blood, my mind partook of the feebleness of my body. I was distracted and irresolute. A cold and clammy perspiration overspread my forehead, and there was fear and shrinking in my heart. At that moment I would have preferred death, but I felt, that to incur death for the mere avoidance of bodily pain, would leave an indelible imputation on my courage—what was it but to conclude my

short, and hitherto not dishonourable career by dying like a coward? The struggle was long and severe, but it passed, and I told the worthy Doctor that I was prepared. He again pressed my hand in strong emotion, but was silent.

Sympathy for mere physical suffering, ranks in the very lowest class of mental emotions, and I ask it not for mine. In the operation which followed, I bore only what thousands have borne before me, many with greater fortitude, and a more resigned spirit; for I know by experience, that a sick-bed may afford occasion for the exercise of a higher courage, than is required, under the influence of strong extraneous excitement, to brave death in the field;—that the humble and inglorious sufferer, may display a spirit more truly heroic, than his who perils life, for human honour and applause, in the imminent deadly breach.

A few days afterwards, the march of the army, which being reinforced, returned once more to resume the siege of Badajoz, made the removal of the wounded a measure of necessity. I was in too miserable a state to be able to bear the jolting of an hospital-waggon, and by the exertions

of my kind Doctor, a litter was procured for my conveyance to Olivença. But even the slightest motion of my shattered frame, made every muscle quiver with agony ; and though the distance was little more than two leagues, such was the accession of fever occasioned by the journey, that long before its conclusion, I was in a state of violent delirium.

At Olivença I remained about three weeks, during a considerable part of which I was dead to every object of the external world. Often, I have been told, during my madness, did I rave of the Lady Melicent. Sometimes, as if bending at her feet, I poured forth the most impassioned oaths of constancy and love, and called on her to redeem her troth, irrevocably plighted in the sight of God. Then would I accuse her of perfidy and falsehood, and invoke heaven and earth, and all the unseen beings of the air, to bear witness of her treachery. Sometimes, in more violent mood, I made the walls to ring with the name of Hewson, and with clenched teeth, and fiery eye-balls, called on him to stand forth and defend his villainy, heaping, when I found he came not, loud and burning curses on

his head. In such paroxysms of my disorder, I would tear the dressings from my wounds, till the very agony I occasioned, found a cure in its excess, and I sank fainting on my pillow.

I would not tire the reader by any account of the various alternations of amendment and relapse, by which the slow progress of my recovery was marked or impeded. Suffice it, that when intelligence arrived that the British army had raised the siege of Badajoz, and were about to retire from the Alentejo, it found me reduced to the very lowest state of debility and exhaustion. The wounded were immediately ordered to be removed from Olivença to Elvas, the only fortress in the province of which possession was to be retained by the allies. I heard the news with indifference, for all energy, both mental and bodily, had departed from me, and I lay a helpless and a passive creature, alike incapable of thought or action. A litter was again procured for me, which rested on two poles, like those of a sedan-chair, and was carried by mules. The awning which covered it, afforded little protection from the heat of the noontide sun, and the air I breathed, was scorching to my wound-

ed lungs. I lay gasping, and unable to move, in speechless anguish, finding relief only in occasional fainting fits, for insensibility was then indeed a relief.

I did, however, reach Elvas alive, and there I remained for three months. Weary and dreary months they were to me. Day after day passed on, and the voice of kindness never reached my ear. I was without books, without a friend,—nay, an acquaintance,—a sick and solitary man. Night after night came silent and sleepless, another yet the same.

And yet I wished for darkness. The apartment in which I lay, and every object it contained, had become odiously familiar to my eyes. Everything around me was associated with the memory of suffering. The table—chairs—the huge oak chest that occupied one corner of the room—the print of the Holy Virgin that hung opposite to my bed—the dark building which threw its gloom across the street upon my window—the huge rafters of the roof, every speck and spot on which was rooted in my memory, what would I not have given to have had them

blotted from my sight—to have even enjoyed the privilege of gazing on vacuity !

But worse than even these, was the eternal ticking of a clock that hung beside my chamber-door. From the detested objects of vision I enjoyed some respite in the darkness of night. But *this* was ceaseless. By night and day its hateful voice was in my ear, ever recalling to my memory how slowly the hours of pain and weariness went by.

These were the feelings of a suffering body and a diseased mind ; but even now, that the circumstances which occasioned them have passed away, I find evidence of their strength in the vividness with which they almost, unbidden, present themselves to my memory.

It was during my stay at Elvas that I received intelligence of my having been promoted to the Majority of the regiment, which became vacant by the death of Colonel Penleaze. It had been my intention, on my recovery, to have noticed, even, if necessary, at the expense of my commission, the insinuations which I considered to have been cast on me by that officer, before our advance at Albuera. But death set-

tles all differences, and Colonel Penleaze was no more. He had received a dangerous wound, of which, about three weeks after the battle, he died.

Gratifying as the intelligence of my promotion was,—for, even in the miserable state to which I was reduced, there was yet ambition in my heart,—another still greater pleasure awaited me. I received letters from England. But it was a pleasure, alas, not unmixed. The letters were from Lucy—there were none from Lady Melicent. When the servant brought them to my bed, vigour for a moment returned to my wounded frame, and, starting from my pillow, I snatched them with my only hand, and pressed them to my lips. Then I fixed my eyes upon them, in the hope of recognizing the hand I most panted to behold.

None were in the writing of Lady Melicent. I knew her small and beautiful characters,—I was not,—I could not be deceived.

Three months had elapsed, and I had received no letter from Lady Melicent. The very hope had been sufficient to buoy my sinking spirits, in the moments when they had most

needed support. More than food or sleep to me had been this fond—this visionary hope. The anticipations of long days and nights had centered in this, and it was now broken. The dreams of solitary and suffering hours had vanished in one instant. The blow was a severe one. Disease for a time had conquered the manliness of my spirit, and, brooding in the loneliness of sorrow, I wept as a child.

Let no one in the palmy pride of unbroken and unbending manhood, sneer at this confession of my weakness. He knows not—he cannot know, till tried by circumstances, that which is within him. The tide with him is full, but the waters may yet ebb from beneath his bark, and leave it dry upon the sands.

Disappointed as I was at the silence of Lady Melicent, my heart still recoiled from the idea of accounting for it by any decrease of affection. It was not—it could not be. Hearts joined as ours, so short an absence could not have divided. Could I not appeal to the confession of her lips, —nay, to the bright tears by which our parting had been hallowed, for evidence of her love? Might she not be ill? Might not her letters have

miscarried? Might she not be in circumstances, when to write was impossible? Oh! all, or any of these might be; but *not*, that her silence proceeded from fickleness of heart. There was treason even in the thought, and I cast it from me.

Poor Lucy! little was there of her natural joyousness of heart discernible in these letters. I had not written, I had been incapable of writing, and she only knew that my name had appeared in the Gazette among the list of the “severely wounded.” But this was enough to people the warm world of her bosom with terrible fears. The time of Lucy’s greatest trial had come. Her sister and her brother, the beings she most loved on earth, had become to her the sources of grief. One lay wounded in a foreign land, and the other—alas, how much more melancholy was her lot!

Of Jane, Lucy could give me no information. She had received no tidings of her, from the moment when Hewson had separated the sisters in their last embrace, and claimed the victim of his tyranny. It was evident that Hewson was determined to prevent all intercourse with her

own family—to darken the last faint gleam, which, till now, had lightened the gloom of her condition.

Not unaccompanied with pain, therefore, was the enjoyment I derived from the perusal of Lucy's letters. With regard to Jane, I had already anticipated the worst. In her case, I had no ground on which to found a hope for future happiness. I knew she had been sold to a demon, and was in his power; he would exact, to the uttermost, the penalty and forfeit of his bond. But even the simple kindness, and fond anxieties of Lucy were as balm to my spirit. Cut off as I then was from the world, I felt desolate and deserted, and there was something soothing in the proof these letters afforded, that I was not yet wholly forgotten,—that I was still, in one kind heart at least, the object of fears, hopes, prayers, tears, wishes, and regrets. Oh! this, in a situation like mine, was much to know and to remember.

My wounds gradually healed, and I was at length pronounced to be in a state when I might, without danger, be removed to Lisbon. The

wounds on my head and face had now cicatrized, and the bandages were removed.

I remember the day, when, curious to observe the change they had produced in my appearance, I ordered a looking-glass to be brought, and gazed upon my countenance, as reflected on its surface. Heaven and earth, what did I behold, ere it dropped from my relaxing fingers, and I sank back half fainting on my couch ! I felt as if a frightful Gorgon had looked forth on me from the mirror. It was not, I at first thought,—it could not be my own face, that had thus hideously glared on me,—Alas, my doubts were shortlived. A dreadful truth, of which, till then, I had been ignorant, was at that moment revealed. I knew that I was thenceforth destined to be in men's eyes but an object of pity or aversion.

There may exist philosophers, on whom such a change of external appearance, might make but a trivial impression ; who, devoting all their energies to brightening the jewel, care little for the casket, in which it is enclosed. Such men I envy, and admire. They are formed to play a nobler and a better part, and they will find

at least one portion of their reward, in being exempted from the chance of such sufferings as those to which I was a prey.

In my constitution, however, there was but a small leaven of original power. What I was, education and the world had made me. Mine was not a mind of strong internal resources, and alike by my ambition and pursuits, I was bound closely to society. In such circumstances, a sudden change had come upon me. What I had been, I was no longer—I could never be again. The prepossessions excited by personal appearance, were, in future, not to be *for* me, but *against* me. I must enter society under disadvantages which it was impossible to overcome. I was to labour under the conviction of being an object, whom *men*, indeed, might tolerate, but from whom *woman* would instinctively shrink back.

It was not the loss of mere personal advantages which excited my regret; these might have departed, uncared for, and disregarded. I would have been but as thousands are, and the course of my life would still have flowed on, calmly and unruffled. But to be different from my fellow-

men, to be singled out among them, as an object of remarkable deformity, whom pity and aversion were doomed to follow as his shadow,—to be a creature offensive to all,—was more—far more, than I could calmly bear.

Several days had elapsed before I again had courage to gaze on the reflection of my features. When I did so, the vehemence of my emotion had passed, and my feelings were calmer, though not less deep. Such a creature as I gazed on ! My face was pale and haggard, my eyes sunk deeply in their sockets, and my features were frightfully distorted by a wound, reaching from the temple to the mouth, by which my upper lip had been divided, and the extent of which was indicated by a long red scar. The whole expression of my countenance was changed, and the very features I beheld, seemed those of a stranger.

Happy, however—comparatively happy, at least—was the moment when I quitted Elvas, and found myself on the road to Lisbon. Oh, that bed, which had for months been to me the unchanging theatre of pain, how did my heart leap, when I knew that I had quitted it for ever !

The memory of all the cheerless days and weary nights I had passed in it, vanished in a moment, as my eye once more gazed on the blue firmament, and I felt my throbbing brow bathed by the first gushing of the free air.

I was obliged to be assisted, almost carried, into the cabriolet ; for reduced as my body was, it was still more than my limbs were able to support. The jolting of the carriage was painful to my wounds, which were yet tender, but my spirits were comparatively light, when I found myself winding slowly along the level but beautiful country of the Alentejo, interspersed with pretty villages and antique towns. The journey was performed slowly, for I was unequal to length of travel ; and though the distance was only ninety miles, I did not reach Lisbon till the fifth morning.

As we drove through the streets, I thought there was more bustle and business apparent than before. The citizens, considering themselves now free from all danger of invasion, had laid aside their arms, and returned to their peaceful avocations, adorned only by the national cockade, as a signal of their loyalty. The number of Bri-

tish officers in the capital, great as it had formerly appeared, had evidently increased. They were to be met with in every street, some on crutches, some with an arm supported by a sling, some evidently suffering from sickness, and many, in the perfect enjoyment of all bodily functions, stood conversing in groups, or loitered in the shady places, endeavouring, by demonstrations of gallantry, to win the eye and favour of some fair Donna, who might be seen singing over her embroidery at a neighbouring lattice.

I drove to the Town-Major's office, and demanded a billet. It was given me, and I was pleased, on arriving at the domicile of my *Patrone*, to find it situated in the highest and most beautiful part of the city, called Buenos Ayres.

Nothing could be finer than the view commanded from my windows. From one, I beheld the suburban prospect of the whole city, stretched out beneath on an inclined plane, reaching down to the very margin of the Tagus, on whose quiet waters lay a large fleet of British men-of-war. From another window, I beheld, in the near ground, the towers of Belem; and afar off, the eye rested on the vast interminable ocean,

with here and there a distant speck, seen slowly moving athwart its bosom.

Nothing, in short, could be more delightful than the situation of my residence. While, in the lower parts of the city, the intensity of the heat was scarcely endurable, in the more elevated region, in which I dwelt, the temperature of the air was cool and pleasant, and the breeze came pure and untainted from the sea. Here symptoms of reviving strength again visited my limbs ; and though I felt my constitution had received a shock, too violent to admit the hope of a perfect restoration to vigour, there was at least the prospect before me, of a gradual recovery from that distressing state of debility, under which I then laboured.

The only alarming symptoms that now remained, proceeded from the wound in my chest. I had still a violent cough, and suffered much after any unusual exertion, from an extreme difficulty of breathing. These were indications of an internal disorder, from which there was no chance of an early recovery ; and to avoid the unpleasantness of a long residence at Lis-

bon, I determined to apply for the sanction of a Medical Board to my return to England.

This conclave of the faculty was held once a fortnight at the Estrella Convent, and thither came the sick, the wounded, and the idle, soliciting, though from very different motives, a continuance of exemption from military duty. I found a very large party assembled on the stated day in the convent. One portion of the company, among whom I formed no unobtrusive unit, was pretty similar to that which is recorded in Scripture, to have annually assembled at the Pool of Bethesda.

It is at a meeting of this sort that one obtains a compendious view of the more immediate and direct evils of war. There were men in the very pride of youth, whom nature had endowed with constitutions of iron, whose bodies were maimed and mangled—whose very looks told of sufferings, on which their lips were silent. I could not gaze on them, without a feeling of brotherhood and interest. We belonged to the same profession, we had been animated by the same hopes, we had fallen martyrs to the same cause. How many of the ties which contribute to bind

societies together, are less strong than these ! And there was, I thought, a sort of *esprit de corps* among us ; the Shibboleth of suffering was common to us all, and though strangers to each other, we naturally spoke in the language of friendship and regard.

The Medical Board, after a minute examination of my case, without hesitation, granted me the leave of absence it was my object to obtain.

While yet at Lisbon, I received a letter from Lady Melicent. She at length had learned that I had been wounded, and expressed many fond fears, and flattering anxieties, on my account. In the delightful emotions which the perusal of this letter excited, all other thoughts and feelings were for a time absorbed. After so long a silence, the most indifferent words traced by her pen, could not be otherwise than precious. Yet when the first glow of gladness had subsided, I imagined there was something in its tone and character different from that by which her former letters had been marked. Why I thought so, I cannot tell. I could detect no coldness ; the sympathy it expressed for my sufferings, was deep, and apparently sincere. I weighed

every word of the letter ; I analyzed each expression ; I pondered long and deeply on every sentence. Criticism lent no aid to my conclusions, yet the instinctive consciousness within me, though unsupported, was unshaken. It came not from reason, nor at the voice of reason would it depart. It was something to be felt, not proved—a conviction—shadowy, perhaps, yet firm and immovable.

I felt, however, that no change of sentiment on the part of her I loved, could now influence my destiny. Fortune had cast an impassable barrier betwixt us. Love ! what a creature am I, I exclaimed, in bitterness of soul, to think of love ! As I spoke, I cast my eyes on a mirror that hung in the apartment, and gazed on the reflection of my own miserable form. Is this the remains of the gay and gallant youth, who had won the guerdon of a lady's heart, for which the proudest had striven, and in vain ? This poor maimed, defaced, and wasted object, can thought of passion still linger in his heart ? Where now are the strong and glorious pulses, with which it once beat, as if, in the fulness of passion, it would have burst its prison-bonds to

have throbbed in freedom? Is this the countenance on which ladies have smiled? Are these the eyes, dim, cold, and hollow, which have exchanged glances of love with the proudest and most beautiful of her sex? And are these thin and distorted lips, those that whispered a tale of burning love in the ear of the Lady Melicent?

I dashed my clenched hand on my forehead, as I turned from the mirror. No! I exclaimed, I may excite pity, my fate may draw tears from her eyes; I may be to her an object of tender,—nay even of fond regret, but of love—Oh never, never, never! Farewell for ever all thought of passion. In woman's eyes I am become a fearful and a loathsome thing. I will give back to the Lady Melicent her vows; I will free her from her plighted troth; I will resign my claim to the dearest blessing of Heaven. Yet never shall the love I bear her pass away. It shall go down with me to my grave, and her name shall be mingled in my latest prayer.

These resolutions were made when my feelings were under the influence of high excitement, but I did not swerve from them in my

calmer moments. Lady Melicent should be free, or rather in justice, she was already free. I was not the man to whom her heart had yielded. The blow that smote me to the earth, had widowed her first love, and she again was free and unshackled as the blackbird in the summer trees, or the lark upon the hill. But even if in the constancy of her heart she still desired to unite her fate to mine, never, never would I consent to the sacrifice of one so generous and noble. It fitted not, that beauty should be linked, to the maimed and the decrepid. Such an union was unnatural, it was revolting. Even to wish it, was to become contemptible in my own eyes—and in the eyes of the world—no, the world never should despise me.

Violent, however, was the effort, and long the conflict, before I was able to give effect to my resolution. For hours I remained seated at the table, the pen in my trembling fingers, but it traced no characters on the paper. A multitude of feelings were struggling within me for expression, and struggling in vain, for they were inexpressible. I wished that my heart should be understood, yet could find no words

to shadow forth its emotions. I sought in language, what language does not afford, the power of painting the wild tumult of vehement and conflicting passions.

Days elapsed before I could command sufficient calmness for the execution of my task. But that at length came, and the letter was written. Deep and poignant were my sufferings, as my fingers traced the words by which I renounced the hope that was dearest to me on earth; but strength came as I proceeded, and the struggle passed away. I told her of the condition to which the fortune of war had reduced me, and painted myself as the wretched creature I was. I thanked her—fondly, fervently, and gratefully thanked her—for her love. That I had been its object, would still be the pride, as it must now be the only consolation of my heart. I absolved her from her engagement, and assured her, that her happiness would ever be the object of my fondest prayers. Fortune had dealt me perhaps a hard measure, but I was resigned. Henceforward she would think of me as one severed from her for ever, but as one whose love would only be exhaled in his

latest gasp. Then I bade her,—and there was a long pause ere I could write the word—

Farewell.

Such was the substance of my letter. As I wrote it, there was a heavy and stupifying pressure on my brain; yet I was calm, for at the time there was an awful stillness of passion within me, like the silence that intervenes between the sweeping gusts of a hurricane. A casual spectator, I think, would have discerned in me no external symptoms of emotion. I addressed, sealed, and dispatched the letter, locked the door of my chamber, and then came the sweep of the tempest, perhaps the more violent for having been so long repressed. Such were the circumstances connected with the most severe trial of my life.

Nothing remained to detain me in Lisbon, and I was soon prepared for my departure. I returned in the Daphne frigate, and was landed at Portsmouth.

CHAPTER IX.

Am I so changed by suffering, so forgot,
That love disowns me; Zillah knows me not?

MONTGOMERY.

Then what must woman be? * * *

* * * * *

They're like the winds upon Lapanthæ's shore,
That still are changing. Oh then love no more.
A woman's love is like that Syrian flower,
That buds and spreads, and withers in an hour.

Thracian Wonder.

I HAD never before returned to my native land without buoyancy of spirit. It was with dull and sluggish feelings that I now first beheld it, looming in the extremity of the horizon. Every eye but mine sparkled with pleasure; every heart beat quicker with the thought of home. What a multitude of dormant sympathies did not the sight of old England awaken in the ship! The songs that rose that night from the forecastle, were merrier than usual, as with outspread wings, the vessel flew on-

ward amid the darkness, triumphing in her way.

The passage had been a rough one, the weather,—for it was winter,—boisterous and cold, and it was in a state of great weakness and exhaustion, that I at length found myself housed in a Portsmouth hotel. I remained its inmate for a week, during which I never quitted my bed. I laboured under a general sinking of the system; all energies, both mental and physical, were dead within me, and life presented no object of sufficient power to stimulate me to exertion. Mine was become

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A heavy, drowsy, unimpassion'd grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, or relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear.

Even affection for my own family, which till now had ever tenanted my bosom, appeared for a time to have become extinct. I wrote no letters, and wished to receive none. The well of every emotion was dried up. Earth contained no spell to rouse me. The chords of feeling were slackened, and refused to vibrate, and though the current of bodily life yet continued to flow, my spirit was torpid and exanimate.

Death is a blessing, when compared with such an existence as mine then was. I thank God, it did not continue long. Green places once more arose amid the desert, and the springs of human sympathy again bubbled up in the fountain of my heart. I was again a being bound by the same ties, and influenced by the same motives, as my fellow men. Even in the cares and anxieties which assailed me, I found pleasure, for any suffering was preferable to the dull, cold, and deathlike torpor of the soul, which had sat on me like a night-mare. I would have braved the fury of the storm, to escape from the stagnation of the calm.

When I reached London, I wrote to Jane and Lucy, informing them of my return. I told them I was ill, and much changed, and promised Lucy soon to visit her at Middlethorpe, where she was again residing with the kind and excellent Willoughbys.

For a man who wishes to enjoy society, or for one who wishes to avoid it, London is alike the place. It was my intention to remain there for some time, and after visiting my sisters, to retire and bury myself in the solitude of Thorn-

hill, if possible, the world forgetting, very certain of soon being by the world forgot.

I had scarcely been in town a week, when one morning, the door of my apartment was thrown open, and in a moment I found myself in the arms of Frank Willoughby. He had learned my address from Lucy, and had hurried up to town to welcome my return, and render me any service in his power. I had resolved to avoid all society, yet the meeting once past, I felt comfort in the presence of a friend. Willoughby was evidently much shocked, though he endeavoured to conceal his emotion, with the change in my appearance; indeed, I knew it could not be otherwise, but I had already begun to learn the hard, though necessary lesson, of submission to my fate. I felt it was cowardice to sink beneath a blow, which human courage could surmount. I was unhappy, yet resigned.

In spite of my urgent entreaties, Frank would not leave me, and the continual flow of his cheerfulness, and a certain characteristic humour which marked him, had, I believed, the effect of preventing the return of that wretched mental

depression, to which, perhaps, I had an hereditary predisposition, and which occasionally came like a sudden blight upon my spirit.

We were seated at breakfast a few days after his arrival, when my servant, to the astonishment of us both, announced "Mr Lavender of Bow Street," and that gentleman entered the apartment. After several polite bows had been interchanged, I addressed him :

"A visit from you, Mr Lavender, is an unexpected pleasure, and has, I fear, originated on the present occasion, from some mistake."

"No mistake I think, sir. I have been sent here by the magistrate on a small piece of business, and shall be happy to await your leisure, to accompany you to Bow Street."

"This, Mr Lavender, is Sir Francis Willoughby, and I am Major Thornton, of the —— at your service; pray, with which of us may your business lie?"

"With you, Major Thornton."

"Then, pray, be so good as to acquaint me with its nature?"

"A small warrant, that is all, sir. A gentleman has sworn that you have put him in bodily

fear, and it is necessary you should be bound over to keep the peace."

Though at first exceedingly surprised by this intelligence, a little reflection convinced me, that Hewson must be the person at whose instance this proceeding had taken place, and it served to increase, if that was possible, the contempt and hatred which I already entertained for his character and conduct. I, therefore, dispatched a messenger instantly, desiring my solicitor to meet me *quam primum* at Bow Street, whither Mr Lavender accompanied us.

On my arrival in town, I had taken legal advice as to the best mode of proceeding, with regard to Hewson, and was strongly advised to refrain from all personal violence, which could only injure my sister's cause, and render the attainment of the object we had in view, more distant and uncertain. I had, therefore, resolved to await calmly the issue of the legal proceedings, before I sought any interview with Hewson, or inflicted on him that vengeance, of which it was now evident he stood in awe.

On arriving at Bow Street, I found the case

was as I supposed. Hewson had made affidavit that he was apprehensive of personal violence, from the letter I had written, and the magistrate informed me it was necessary that I should be bound over to keep the peace, myself in L.2000, and two sureties in L.1000 each. This was accordingly done, and we departed.

During my stay in London, I met likewise with an old friend, who has been already mentioned in the early portion of these memoirs. It was William Lumley, whom I had not seen for many years. He now belonged to one of the Inns of Temple, and had become a barrister of considerable practice. Of course, we met often. He was still a bachelor; and in telling old stories, I found my sister Jane had been the object of his youthful and ardent love. Circumstances had not favoured his passion. He was poor, and had to push his way in the world, and his attachment remained unknown, even to its object. The flame smouldered, but was not extinguished; and amid his slow and toilsome progress in his profession, it had served to light him on his path, and animate him in his labours, with the prospect of a reward, still within

the pale of his ambition. But the course of true love never did run smooth. Jane married, and poor Lumley's long-cherished hopes were dashed rudely to the ground. The *Château en Espagne* was gone, but the solid benefit of the exertions to which it had stimulated him, remained, and his character as a sound and able lawyer stood high.

I told him Jane's melancholy story, and it deeply affected him, and I was glad to find one, at once so able and so zealous, to whose management her cause might safely be committed. The good old man his father, he informed me, now an Octogenarian, still lived, and felt pride in the pupils he had sent into the world, stored with his instructions, several of whom had already attained to distinction, in their different walks of life.

Before I quitted London, an incident occurred, which once more stung my feelings into an agony almost insupportable. One morning, I had gone with Willoughby to the Exhibition of Ancient Pictures, which we were engaged in examining. The exhibition having been open for some time, the number of spectators was few,

so few at least, that one might look at the pictures without being jostled in a crowd. I have no technical knowledge of painting, but I have a taste,—of course an uncultivated one, for the art, and I was standing opposite a fine landscape of Gaspar Poussin, when the noise of a party advancing from the bottom of the room, for a moment diverted my attention from the picture. What were my feelings, when turning round, the first object that met my eye was Lady Melicent! She was the leading star of a gay group, and advanced from the bottom of the Gallery, leaning on the arm of Lord Lyndhurst, whom she occasionally addressed in that half-whispering tone, which indicated a considerable change in the footing of their intimacy. It was evident she was in high spirits; I had never seen her countenance more gay and animated, and I observed her eyes glance occasionally round the apartment, as if to enjoy the homage, which the gaze of the bystanders paid to her beauty. Pleasure was written legibly on her countenance, no inward care disturbed its serenity. The fabled smiles of Euphrosyne were

not more beautiful and joyous, than those which adorned her features.

Still hanging on Lord Lyndhurst's arm, Lady Melicent advanced slowly, and stood near the centre of the apartment, right opposite to the spot, to which, from the moment my eye first rested on her, I had been rooted. Then a sudden failure of strength came over me, and I sank into a chair, literally gasping for breath, for there was a choking in my throat, and every muscle of my frame became rigid as those of a corpse. Language cannot express the agony, or if torture be a stronger word, the torture of these moments. At length her full, dark, beautiful eyes rested on my countenance. She evidently did not know me, but as if willing to avoid the contemplation of a disagreeable object, hastily withdrew them.

Just then my situation became such as to attract the attention of the company.

"Here's a sick gentleman," cried one, "give him air."

"Bring a glass of water directly," cried another.

"Assist the gentleman down stairs," cried a third.

"He's dying," ejaculated another.

"Give him time, and he'll recover," exclaimed a fifth.

I heard all this, for my senses had not forsaken me. I was the object of universal attention, and I believe of pity. Willoughby, on hearing the noise, came running up, and found me in the situation I have described.

"Good God, Thornton, you are ill—very ill!" he exclaimed loudly, in the first paroxysm of his anxiety.

At the word "Thornton," Lady Melicent turned her face towards me, with a sudden and almost convulsive motion, and again gazed for a moment on my haggard and deathlike countenance. I imagine she recognized me, for I saw her become pale as ashes, then whispering something in the ear of Lord Lyndhurst, she turned suddenly away, and I saw her no more.

One of the servants brought me a glass of water, with which Willoughby bathed my temples, and accepting one of the dozen smelling bottles, which the surrounding ladies offered for

my use, [woman is ever kind and compassionate] Willoughby held it to my nose, and I recovered, though slowly.

At length, I was able to quit a scene, in which I had played a part so involuntarily conspicuous. Leaning on Willoughby's arm, I with difficulty staggered out of the apartment, and, getting into a coach, drove home to the hotel.

On our arrival, I thanked him for his assistance, and entreated him to leave me. To this he at first demurred, but on my more strongly urging the request, he complied, and I was left alone.

For some time I continued walking up and down the apartment, in a state of pitiable mental confusion. The elements of thought and feeling within me were conglomerated into confused and inextricable masses. There was anarchy in my brain, and chaos in my heart. All impulses of soul and sense had been awakened, and in their very multitude lay the cause of my disorder.

More enviable, perhaps, was even this condition, than that by which it was succeeded. Was it possible, I thought, that this woman had ever

loved me, when, even at the moment when she must have thought, that I lay mangled and suffering, in a foreign land, (for I had not mentioned to her, my intention of returning to England,) she was thus happy and regardless of my fate?—yes, the fate of one who had received the maiden vows of her eternal love, whose bosom at parting had been moistened by her tears, by whose arms she had been encircled, whose lips had imprinted kisses on her burning cheek! And yet within one month—one little month—this being had been forgotten. She had no sorrow for his fate, no tear for his memory. His misfortunes had not banished the smile from her lips, nor dimmed, even for a season, the sparkle of her eye. No grief had paled her cheek, no melancholy remembrance lingered in her heart. *He* had been whistled down the wind a prey to fortune, unsorrowed for, and unloved.

True, indeed, she was free. I had given back the proud promise of her love. That precious gift had indeed been mine, but it was mine no longer. I could accuse her of no wrong; I had suffered no injustice. But to be *so soon* forgot-

ten ! It was there my flesh quivered, and the iron entered into my soul.

I expected not that she should pine in unblest maidenhood for my sake. But I did expect,—why should I conceal my vanity?—that she would have wept for my loss, and lamented, at least for a season, the unhappy fate by which we had been eternally divided. Surely the memory of fond and unhappy love claimed more than was compatible, at such a moment, with a light heart and an unclouded brow:

For the first time, I felt tired and disgusted with the world. I felt myself solitary and deserted—a being cut off from all human sympathy, for his sorrows and sufferings. On whom, did I now possess any claim for commiseration ? On my sisters ? Was there not one dearer than they, to whom I had been bound by ties yet closer, and by whom that claim had been denied ? But what, after all, was the commiseration of sisters ? Was that alone sufficient to sweeten life, and reconcile me to the weary burden it imposed ? Was my cup not empty, because a single drop might still remain in the

goblet when its contents had been dashed upon the ground?

Not by day alone was I the victim of these mournful thoughts. They came to me by night, and mingled poison in my dreams. I loathed society; even that of Willoughby was a burden to me, but he would not forsake me. What had happened he knew not, but he saw that something pressed heavily on my mind, and my health had become evidently worse. Every symptom under which I laboured was aggravated, and all his kind endeavours to relieve the oppression which weighed me to the earth were employed in vain. The spell that bound me was a strong one, and would not for a time be broken.

Willoughby urged me to accompany him home; I was glad to flee from London, and consented. The unhappy are seldom stationary, for there is some relief, even in mere locomotion, to the dull monotony of settled sorrow. Lucy, too,—I would again embrace my sister; and that was something. To me, indeed, it was now *all*; for what more of pleasure had the world in store for me?

We set out for Middlethorpe, and arrived there. As we passed the farm, Willoughby stopped to give some orders, and left me to proceed to the house alone. I descended from the carriage, inquired for the ladies, and was ushered into the drawing-room. Laura was there alone. The servant had announced my name, and she was deadly pale, as I entered the apartment. She rose, as if she would have advanced to meet me, but yet remained rooted to the spot, with both her hands extended towards me, in token of welcome. I could but take one of them, and I pressed it warmly in mine.

It was natural that I should be considerably moved, but the sight of her emotion, which all her efforts to be calm could not conceal, added greatly to mine. I endeavoured to address her cheerfully, but, though her lips moved, she answered not. The tears which had collected in her fine eyes, rolled down her cheeks slowly, and in large drops, as she gazed on me. There was no sobbing, or convulsive agitation of the features. The current of her emotion might be strong and deep, but there was calmness on the surface.

Laura Willoughby had resumed her place on the sofa, and I was about to seat myself beside her, when a sound of joy was heard in the apartment, a soft rushing of feet, and, scarcely had my eyes caught a glance of Lucy, ere I felt myself clasped in her arms, and she hung about my neck. Light as was her slender form, the burden was too great for my strength, and I staggered back a pace or two. She felt this, I think, for her grasp became lighter, and pushing herself gently from me, she bent her eyes upon my face, then, uttering a faint scream, hid hers in my bosom.

The emotion of this meeting brought on an attack of that suffocating oppression which my wound had occasioned, and, unable longer to support it, I sank exhausted into a seat. Laura Willoughby observed my condition, and approaching gently, she clasped Lucy in her arms, and the tears of these two kind and beautiful creatures were mingled in their sorrowful embrace. Lucy's sobs came loud and convulsively; Laura shed tears, but they were silent ones.

This scene was interrupted by the entrance

of Lady Willoughby and Frank. The countenance of the good old lady showed that she partook considerably of the emotions by which the party on her entrance was pervaded.

“We have all suffered much on your account, Cyril,” she addressed me; “but, thank God, we see you once more restored to your country and friends. I have felt for you as I would for my own son, and as a son you must allow me to welcome your return.” So saying, the Dowager bent forward, and, for the first time in her life, kissed my cheek.

I looked up in gratitude, but could not speak.

“Come, come, young ladies,” cried Frank, willing to relieve a little the sombre character of the scene, “don’t give my friend Cyril so dismal a reception. He has brought home, you see, some honourable badges of his gallantry; a few scars, for which a militia officer would give a thousand pounds, in order to look like a veteran. To be sure, he’s rather weak, but now we’ve got him amongst us, it will go hard but we’ll set him on his legs again. Depend upon it, a month of your good nursing, and my plea-

sant society, will make him another man. But don't throw him at first into the blue-devils, by crying, as if he had come home to you a mere Rawhead and Bloodybones; smiles, not tears, are what are wanted for his recovery.—Ah, there's the dinner-bell, so run away up stairs, and mind you come down with pleasant faces.”

Laura and Lucy, perhaps glad of an opportunity of recovering themselves, withdrew, the latter kissing me as she passed, though, I observed, she closed her eyes as she did so.

There is something soothing and gratifying to a man to find himself the object of woman's tears. It is to woman we naturally look for consolation in affliction; from her alone it is not mortifying to receive compassion. Man's pity hurts our pride; woman's, like oil shed upon the billows, stills the heart.

When the ladies descended to dinner, Lucy's eyes were still red, but she had mastered the violent emotion which the unexpected change in my appearance had excited in the morning. She sat beside me with her hand clasped in mine, as if desirous to receive stronger evidence than

her sight afforded her of the reality of my presence. I saw she had resolved to be calm, and made strenuous efforts to be so, yet every now and then, when she thought herself unperceived, she stole a glance at my countenance, and I saw again that the tears were brimming in her eyes. Laura Willoughby, I thought, looked paler than I had seen her of old. She sat with downcast eyes, but when she spoke, she raised them on me, with a melting expression of kindness, melancholy yet soothing, and there was tenderness in every tone of her finely modulated voice.

At Middlethorpe I was the engrossing object of interest to all. Willoughby was partial to field-sports, in which I was too ill to participate, and his parents led him to be much abroad. My exercise did not at first extend beyond a walk in the park, or a short ride on a favourite shooting pony. Even these, however, I was not suffered to make alone. When on foot, Lucy walked with me, and was unhappy if I accepted not the support of her arm. When I rode, her hand was on the bridle, guiding the steps of the docile animal, on the smoothest path. Nor was Laura less assiduous than Lucy in render-

ing me all those little offices of kindness, trifling perhaps in themselves, yet deeply prized, because they evidently proceeded from a warm and an affectionate heart. Cold is his spirit who feels no flattering emotion in knowing himself the engrossing object of the ministering cares of two young and beautiful women. Their hands were ever ready to arrange the pillows on my couch ; and there were moments, as I beheld their graceful forms hovering around it, when my heart almost ceased to be forlorn, and its pulses beat as they had once been wont. Never, indeed, for a moment, was I absent from their thoughts. My wants required no expression, for they anticipated them all. When dull and dispirited, they soothed me by their kind sympathy. On our return from walking, when my weary limbs required repose, Laura Willoughby would sing, for me, to the accompaniment of her harp, or read aloud a novel of Miss Austin or Miss Edgeworth, while Lucy sat at my feet, watching every look, and imagining little offices of kindness.

Frank Willoughby's prediction was in some

measure verified. Before a month elapsed, my health was, indeed, greatly improved, but there was a barbed arrow in my heart, that could not be withdrawn.

CHAPTER X.

Did I but purpose to embark with thee
On the smooth surface of a summer's sea,
While gentle Zephyrs play in prosperous gales,
And Fortune's favour fills the swelling sails ?
And would forsake the ship, and make the shore,
When the winds whistle and the tempests roar ?

PRIOR.

I HAD been some weeks at Middlethorpe, when I received the following letter from Lady Melicent. It was addressed to me in Lisbon, and from thence had been returned to England :—

“ YOUR last melancholy letter, my dearest Cyril, has cost me many tears. The thought of all you have endured, and the evident depression of your spirits when you wrote, have caused me deep uneasiness, and must continue to do so till I receive happy tidings of your recovery. Believe me, I deeply sympathise in all

your sufferings. Would to God, that, by any sacrifice of mine, I could assuage your pain, and restore you to happiness !

“ I know and appreciate the generous motives that prompted you to resign all thoughts of our union ; and, believe me, though I consent that our engagement should cease, the reasons of my consent are altogether unconnected with the personal misfortunes you describe yourself to have suffered. Oh, no. To me you will be always the same, and no loss of personal attractions could ever alter my affections.

“ But perhaps we were rash in forming that engagement. I confess, that difficulties, which appeared small at a distance, seem almost insurmountable on a nearer approach. I could never hope to obtain my father’s consent to our union ; nor, were I to marry against his wishes, could I ever hope for his forgiveness.

“ It is for these reasons, and these alone, that I now consent to break off our correspondence. Let us no longer think or write as lovers ; but, believe me, I shall never cease to feel a deep interest in your happiness ; and when time, as I trust it will, has softened the ardour of our feel-

ings, we may yet meet as friends,—warm, unchangeable, and sincere ones.

“ You may believe, that to write thus has cost me a severe struggle. Alas ! that it should have been a necessary one. Farewell. And believe me ever, my dearest Cyril,—for so I must still call you,—with unchanging affection,

“ Yours,

“ M. DE VERE.”

I know not that the perusal of this letter produced any new feelings of bitterness and disappointment, but it certainly added new pungency to those from which I already suffered. Its tone, I thought, was cold, heartless, and unfeeling. It was evident she had never loved me. The cords of a love, that deserved the name, could not thus have been broken by a sudden wrench. When I remembered the tearless agony in which my last words to her had been addressed, and read the answer which these words had called forth, I felt that it never could have been written by one who loved as I had done. I felt that there had been, on my part, a needless waste of unparticipated suffering. I had been

led to play a dangerous game, and had been a loser ; for that, indeed, I had myself to blame. But the players had not hazarded equal stakes. She had played but with counters ; I had set my all upon a die. Love, which, to her, had been but as a toy or an amusement, was to me the very food of life.

But to what purpose were these reflections ? Be her faults what they might, my heart still clung to her. She was still destined to be to me the object of fond and devoted passion. Her empire had been established too firmly to be reconquered ; but even were it otherwise, I would have remained a voluntary bondsman : I willed not to be free.

The Lady Melicent thus still remained the engrossing subject of my thoughts. I suffered unutterable pain, whenever I heard her name even casually uttered in conversation. In this respect, poor Lucy was continually inflicting pangs, of which she was unconscious. The kindness of Lady Melicent, during her stay at Staunton, had excited her warm regard ; and there was no theme on which she was more eloquent than the grace, the beauty, and the thou-

sand claims to admiration, of her, whose very name pierced me like a dagger. Lucy had not been a confidante. She knew nothing of our attachment; she saw only what lay on the surface, and had not attempted to penetrate beneath it.

About a fortnight after the arrival of the letter, we were seated one morning at the breakfast-table, when Lucy, who had just taken up the newspaper, attracted the attention of the party, by her exclamations of pleasure and surprise.

"Well, this is extraordinary," she said, half speaking to herself, and half to the company. "How blind I must have been, never to have observed what was going on. Indeed, I always thought she positively disliked him. The courtship must have been carried on very slyly, to escape my notice; but I'm so glad she's married, I must write her a letter of congratulation. I daresay, she has not forgot to send me gloves and bridecake."

Lucy's soliloquy, of course, attracted general attention, and I asked, whose marriage it was that had excited so strong an interest?

“Nay, guess if you can,” she answered, playfully; “but on second thoughts, I don’t think you ever could guess right; so I’ll relieve your curiosity by reading it:—

“ ‘Married, by special license, at Staunton Court, by his Grace the Archbishop of York, the Earl of Lyndhurst, to the Lady Melicent de Vere, only daughter of the Earl of Amersham. The celebration of the ceremony was strictly private, none being present but the near relatives of the two noble families thus happily united. In the evening, a splendid entertainment was given, to which all the rank and fashion of the county were invited. Nothing could be more interestingly lovely than the appearance of the bride. She wore a splendid dress of Brussels lace, magnificently adorned with diamonds. After the ceremony, the happy pair set out, in a new travelling carriage, ordered for the occasion, for Battiscomb Park, the seat of the noble bridegroom, to spend the honeymoon.’ ”

This, or something similar to this, was what Lucy read. In a sort of convulsive stillness, I heard it to an end. The cup, which I was rai-

sing to my lips, as she began to read, was still held untasted when she concluded. Then in a moment, a violent and irresistible impulse seized my frame, and dashing it, rather than dropping it, from my hand, I sprung up, and ran from the apartment. As I passed, the hall door stood open, and I rushed forth into the park.

It was a winter's day. The snow lay upon the ground, and the wind, which blew from the north-east, was accompanied by violent showers of hail. There was an unaccustomed vigour in my limbs, I felt a wild desire of motion, and I hurried on, I knew not, cared not, whither. Often, indeed, was I obliged to stop, and pant, like a dying man, for a mouthful of breath; but then, the fiend from which I fled overtook me, and again I rushed on. My reason, which had withstood many assaults, had yielded at last. The hailstones, driven by the wind, beat painfully on my face, but I thought not of this, and quitting the park, I ran madly for the uplands.

The hare started from my foot, and fled from me afar off; and the flocks of sheep, as I ap-

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proached them, ran, in wild confusion, from their food, as if scared by the approach of some unholy thing.

This could not last long. I sunk at length, overpowered, amid the snow, and lay shivering and helpless. Then, for the first time, did my anguish find vent in words.

“ Oh God,” I exclaimed, “ why hast thou made a thing, so eminently lovely, thus merciless and cruel ? Does she not know, that the poor, maimed, and mangled creature, on whom she tramples, can feel a pang as great as she, in all her beauty and her pride ? Oh, why does she thus outrage the feelings of a heart that would have died for her ? Yet is not her nature soft ? She could not plunge a dagger in my bosom,—she would shrink from the sight of a fellow-creature broken alive upon the wheel,—and yet inflicts an agony, to which such sufferings are but mercy. Oh, how long must I endure the grievous burden of life, and suffer under the weight of madness and misery that presses upon my soul !

“ Almighty God, to whose behests all nature

VOL. III.

P

ministers, grant that in these cold and wintry elements, I may find the only balm for wounds like mine—Death. Leave me not a desolate and wretched being, in the hell of this unfeeling world !”

Thus madly, impiously did I rave, and the wind, as it covered me with the snow-drift, swept on, loaded with the sound of my frantic imprecations. By degrees, my limbs became icy cold, and at length I was silent, for the muscles of my throat refused their office. The numbness gradually extended to my vitals, and I lay, a living being, yet without the power of motion. My faculties seemed to have recovered from their temporary derangement, and were again clear. I felt as if the union between mind and body had been dissolved, and my free spirit waited only for a signal to take its flight.

In this state I had lain for some time, dying, and wishing to die, when, at the bottom of the hill, I observed Frank Willoughby, and some of the servants in search of me. They had tracked my footsteps to the extremity of the park, but there, from the drifting, they had been lost ; and, extended in a line, the party were now ad-

vancing towards me, hallooing at short intervals as they proceeded.

They saw me not, for I was already white with the snow, and I watched their progress with an anxious eye. I prayed they might be delayed but for a few minutes, for my heart beat languidly, and at long intervals, and the blood was freezing in my very bosom.

“Let but their footsteps linger a little longer, let the snow-drift blind their eyes but for a short space, and all my earthly sorrows will be over.”

My petition was not granted. I was observed, and in a moment, Frank Willoughby had thrown himself on the ground beside me, and pressed me in his arms. I could not return his embrace, nor answer his kind words. I had no power to move a single muscle of my frame. Never was a spirit united to a body, by a smaller or more fragile link.

They raised me on their shoulders, and carried me to the nearest cottage, where I remained, till the arrival of a carriage to convey me to Middlethorpe. Before it came, the efforts to restore animation to my limbs had been par-

tially successful, and the sense of feeling had been excited. When we reached Middlethorpe, Lucy's grief, at beholding me lifted from the carriage, and with difficulty supported across the hall, was violent and excessive. Laura, too, was there, but Niobe was not more still.

I was put instantly to bed. The doctor, who had already been sent for, soon arrived, and pronounced that I laboured under a violent inflammation of the chest. All the progress to convalescence which I had hitherto made, was in one moment gone. Copious bleeding was declared necessary, and carried into effect. The violence of the disease was thus conquered, but I was reduced by it to a state of even more than infantine weakness.

Never were the labours of love around a sick bed more zealously performed. Under what different aspects, even in my short experience, had I already beheld woman. I had known her, in the hours of elation and joy, shedding grace and beauty on life, and gilding the horizon with light and splendour. But clouds had gathered on the surface of the sky, and the star had hid its light.

Then I had known her in hours of pain and anguish, soft, tender, generous, loving, and compassionate, charming the eye, and pouring balm into the heart. Trite, indeed, but only trite, because the heart of universal man has acknowledged them to be true, are the exquisite lines of our mighty minstrel.

Oh woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light-quivering aspen made,
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!

My recovery was slow, for the stamina of my constitution, originally firm, had at length given way, and its elasticity was gone. I was pressed down by deep and settled dejection. Perhaps, till now, even unconsciously, a germ of hope had lain buried in my heart; if so, it was now crushed for ever. I knew at once the worst and the best, that could befall me. To all the future arrows of fate, I was invulnerable. Henceforward, hope and fear were to be eradicated from my nature. One dull unvarying shadow hung over my future life, neither to be bright-

ened into sunshine, nor darkened into deeper gloom.

Weeks wore away, and the effect of time, and the warmth of the advancing summer, had restored as much of a shattered frame and constitution, as appeared destined ever to be restored. The affection of my lungs still continued, and the doctors spoke of my chance of recovery, as doubtful and remote. This moved me little, for though I sought not for death, I was yet indifferent to life.

Another and more interesting conviction had reached my heart; I knew that I was beloved by Laura. Gradually and slowly had this knowledge dawned upon me. In no look or gesture had her love betrayed itself, no word of passion had been spoken, no written thoughts had unconsciously told the secret of her besom, yet I knew, and felt it to be so.

The conviction was to me a sad one. It brought with it no feeling of triumph, no thought of pride. The time was past, when it might have goaded on the sluggish current of my blood, and have lit up the flashes of my sunken soulless eyes. Alas, it came no wel-

come intruder, for it was accompanied by deep and bitter self-reproach.

Hitherto, in the sad story of my love, I had been more sinned against, than sinning, and I had felt the dignity of suffering wrong. Towards the Lady Melicent, whatever might have been my errors, they had been followed by more than the full measure of expiation. The love that had been sown in rapture, had been reaped in agony. *I* alone had suffered—there had been no partner in my pangs—one victim only had bled.

Now it was otherwise. I had ever regarded Laura with strong affection ; but she had never been to me the object of vehement and engrossing passion. The regard I felt for her had not been incompatible with the deeper and more powerful sentiment, inspired by another. I had lived with Laura, in habits of unrestrained confidence. In brighter and happier days, how many sweet hours had I passed in her society ! Our regard had begun almost in infancy, and never had the shadowy chain that linked us together, from childhood to maturity, been broken. Had I never known Lady Melicent, she would, I

think,—she must have been, the object to attract the whole undivided strength of my affections. As it was, I had given Laura cause to think she knew my heart, and I had deceived her. My lips had never breathed the secret of my passion for another. I had led her, in the blindness of undoubting confidence, to the brink of a precipice, and I felt that *her* sufferings were *my* guilt.

Often, in moments of incredulous depression, would I start back, from the conviction that I was, or could be the object of love. But not as that of the world, had been the love of Laura Willoughby. It had stood the ordeal of time and of misfortune, and what I had been to her in the days of prime, I now was in those of my decay. My star had become pale, yet her love had not waned; amid the darkness of my misery, it had shone shadowless and unchanged.

I felt it a paramount duty that she should no longer be deceived. Tardy and inadequate as such a reparation was, it was now all I had to offer. It was necessary that she should at length learn, the story of a blighted and a withered heart. To speak was painful, but to be silent—

guilt; and I had already become too familiar with suffering, to care for the retrenchment of a pang.

One morning, when we were seated alone in the drawing-room, I determined to execute my task.

“Laura, you remember the morning when, after hearing the account of, Lady Lyndhurst’s marriage, (the words half stuck in my throat) I ran from the apartment like a madman. Did you not think me a strange and unaccountable being? I am sure you did.”

She did not answer, but gently raising her eyes, cast them on my face, and a smile,—a faint one,—passed like a sudden gleam of light over her countenance.

“I am sure you must, even if your own conjectures led you to divine the cause.”

“Yes,” she answered in a low and soft voice, “the cause of your agitation could not be mistaken. I think I already know *all*.”

“No, not *all*, not all. God, the Searcher of hearts, alone can know all; but something of my story—enough, perhaps, for your kind heart

to compassionate, I would, if you will permit me, now tell you."

She again raised on me her moist and beautiful eyes, with a look that sank into my soul.

"Nay, Cyril," she said, taking my hand as she spoke, "do not now enter on a subject, on which it is impossible for you to speak without agitation. I, too, know that memory is painful, and it were perhaps wiser not to break the slumber of past sorrows. Think rather on the future, *that* at least may be gilded by the fancy; the present, and the past, are beyond our power."

"To me, Laura, there is no future, or, at least, such as the present is, the future will be—must be. True, my eyes may gaze on new scenes, and my own circumstances, and those of the world around me, may be changed. But that wintry world that is within, no second spring can ever renovate. I feel that to be changeless as the grave. For me, futurity has nothing brighter or darker than the present. Such as I am, death must find me."

"You talk sadly, Cyril; you ought not,—you must not indulge in such gloomy presentiments. It is wrong, Cyril, very wrong, to de-

spair. Even in this world there is a balm for every wound but dishonour. I speak to you as a friend, for I have ever looked upon you as my best,"—she hesitated, "my dearest one. Give not way to this sinking of the spirit, I entreat you. It is ungrateful—it is sinful."

"I have, I fear, talked more sadly than I intended," endeavouring as I spoke to smile, "for I meant not to distress you. I will now speak calmly.

"You have never, I think, seen Lady Lyndhurst; but the fame of her beauty,—of her fascination, has of course reached you."

Laura bowed slightly, without raising her head, and her face was hid from my gaze.

"I loved her. With what love, I will not speak. You think, perhaps, this was madness, but I did more than even this. I told her of my love. I will not say it was returned, but our troth, at least, was mutually plighted. I quitted my country a proud and a happy man, bearing within me the full treasure of my happiness, in the confidence of being loved. Her image went with me. It forsook me not on

sea or on land, in the tent, in the siege, or on the battle-field.

“ In a moment, I became the creature you now behold me. The struggle between life and death was a long one, but in pain and suffering it was still with me, and I recovered.

“ Then I released her from her promise. For worlds, I would not have bound her to a thing like myself. I received a cold answer to my letter ; I saw her, on my arrival in London, happy and careless of my fate, and, in less than two months, she was married to another.

“ Tell me not to banish her from my heart. It were but a waste of words to do so. Believe me, I have striven strongly, fearfully, and vainly, and I know it cannot be.”

At first, when I had done speaking, Laura bent her head forwards to the table, and, pressing it with her hands, remained in that posture for about a minute, then, as if suddenly acquiring strength to command her feelings, she once more turned her face towards me, and it was calm. I say calm,—for, although deep pity and interest were never more legibly expressed, her

countenance retained no trace of more violent emotion.

“Cyril,” she said, “your’s is indeed a melancholy tale. I know,—at least, I think I know, your character, and can imagine through what sufferings you have passed. I would comfort you, Cyril, but what have I to offer but tears? you see they are yours,” pointing at the same time to my hand, already moistened with them, “take them, they are my all.”

“Yes, Laura, I receive them, and, believe me, with a grateful heart,” raising at the same time my hand to my lips, and kissing away the drops that lay on it. “Earth can now afford nothing more precious, than these tears. The wounds for which *they* afford no balm, must indeed be incurable.”

“Though I cannot comfort you,” she resumed, “I would yet entreat you, by all you hold dear on earth,—and surely, Cyril, there is still much to which your heart grapples,—not to yield yourself to despondency. You have been, and are perhaps yet destined to be tossed on a stormy sea. To your eye no haven may be near,—no ray of hope may shine in the sur-

rounding darkness—but you are alike called on by reason and religion, to buffet with the waters to the last, and, at least, not to sink a supine and willing victim in the abyss.

“Let your trust be in that God, who raised the tempest, and can again calm it. Cast yourself on Him, with a full reliance on his mercy, and He will not forsake you in the struggle.”

I was silent, and she proceeded.

“I fear I am a bad preacher, Cyril, and I weary you. I have touched on a subject, perhaps, too sacred to be even alluded to by one like me. Pardon me, for I have indeed spoken in the fulness of my heart.”

Most beautiful and benign was the expression of her countenance at that moment. Never had her eye gleamed more brightly;—never had the music of her sweet voice fallen so meltingly on my ear. But the tears, which, as she spoke, had ceased to flow, again fell fast, and bending down her forehead, she covered it with her hands.

“Do not think, Laura,” and I took her unresisting hand as I spoke; “do not think, Laura, though my heart be not now fitted to receive

them, that your words have fallen on a cold and an ungrateful soil. They have been treasured here—they may long lie dormant, but they shall not die, and it may happen that, like bread cast upon the waters, their consolation may be found after many days. Forgive me, Laura, for the pain which it is too evident I have occasioned you. There is no other being on earth to whom I could have disclosed the secret that preys on me. It concerns not me alone, but with you it is safe.”

She answered only by a look, that spoke plainly as words, “ can you doubt it ?”

Much did we talk of on that morning, and the voice of her sweet soothing was not without its influence, on my irritable spirits. She spoke comfort to me, and I was comforted, for I knew that she shared my sorrows ; and the thought stole through my heart, as we parted, that if, in my brighter days, I had loved Laura Willoughby, happiness might yet have been mine.

CHAPTER XI.

Though hills were set on hills,
And seas met seas to guard thee, I would through;
I'd plough up rocks steep as the Alps in dust,
And lave the Tyrrhene waters into clouds,
But I would reach thy head.

BEN JOHNSON.

Nor sleep nor sanctuary,
Being naked, sick; nor fane, nor Capitol,
The prayers of priests, nor times of sacrifice,
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
Their rotten privilege and custom, 'gainst
My hate to Marcius. Where I find him, were it
At home upon my brother's guard, even there,
Against the hospitable canon, would I
Wash my fierce hand in his heart.

Coriolanus.

ON the morning following this conversation, the post brought me two letters. The first I opened was from my uncle. I had written to him since my return; but as it was probable we might never meet again, I had not thought it necessary to inflict on him the pain, of learning the nature and consequences of my wounds.

This letter was to desire, if possible, I would again visit him. He was old, he said, and his decreasing strength told him, that if we were

again to see each other in this world, our meeting must be a speedy one. Had his infirmities been less, he would have spared me this journey, and have come to me, but he was now unequal to travel, and hoped I had still regard enough for an old man that loved me, to visit him once more before I again went abroad, if that was my intention. At the end of the epistle was inserted, probably by stealth, the following characteristic note from Girzy :—

“ Noo, Maister Cyril, mak nae havers aboot the matter, but just pit yer fit in the coach, and come yer ways doon, to gladden the een o’ yer auld uncle wi’ a sight o’ ye, afore he gangs the way o’ a’ flesh. Puir man, he’s had a sair doon-come sin’ ye parted ; but he’s aye toddlin’ aboot, and canna get his heart awa’ frae the coontin’-house. Ye mind, ye promised to come back afore ye gaed awa’ ; but dinna negleck to gie me a day or twa’s notice o’ yer comin’, that ye mayna find the house ower bare o’ provisions, and that I may hae yer bed weel aired.

“ Your loving servant,

“ GIRZY BLACK.”

The other letter awakened feelings deeper and more violent. It was from William Lumley, to whose management I had intrusted the legal measures which were in progress in Doctors Commons against Hewson, for a separation *a mensa et thoro*. Miserable indeed was the intelligence it conveyed.

It had been ascertained, he said, that poor Jane, under the brutal treatment of her husband, had become insane, and was now in confinement in a private mad-house in Gloucestershire. By a sudden impulse, I crushed the letter in my hand as the words met my eye, and ringing, ordered the carriage to the door as soon as possible. I did not make Lucy a partner in the suffering, which this intelligence occasioned; and without stating the object of my journey, I merely informed her that unexpected business had rendered my presence necessary at some distance; and requesting Frank Willoughby to accompany me, I told him in a whisper, that my motive in making the request should be explained to him on the road. My portmanteau was soon arranged for the journey, and in less than

an hour, Frank Willoughby and myself were rolling rapidly on our way to Feltham.

I then communicated to him the nature of the intelligence which had occasioned this sudden journey, and my firm resolution no longer to delay calling Hewson to account, for his base and inhuman conduct. My blood boiled as I proceeded in the narrative, and vain was every dissuasive argument, with which my companion endeavoured to temper my rashness.

True, I was bound over to keep the peace to Hewson. What then? Had every shilling I possessed in the world, or might hereafter possess, depended on my forbearance towards this wretch; nay, more, had the infliction of just punishment on his head been attended with disgrace as well as beggary, it would not at that moment have changed one iota of my resolution. I would have sacrificed all, to the gratification of this one ruling purpose of my heart. Had he been separated from my vengeance by a wall of fire, I would have gone through flames to reach him. The wrongs of my sister called aloud for retribution, was it in my nature to prove deaf to the cry?

Willoughby soon saw that dissuasion was hopeless, in the state of extreme morbid excitement under which I laboured, and limited his endeavours to moderating rather than opposing the impetuous current of my feelings. Though rejected as a counsellor, he remained with me as a friend.

We slept on the road, and on the following day reached Hewson's. I wished to have an interview with him alone, and for this reason Willoughby consented to remain at a little inn a few miles distant, while I proceeded unaccompanied to the house. Hewson was at home. The servant announced my name, and I was shown into an apartment, where I found him seated alone. He rose hastily from his chair, with an air of mingled fear and embarrassment, as I entered, and bowed. His salutation was not returned, and an interval of silence ensued. Hewson, who at first had been taken by surprise, was too much a man of the world not soon to recover sufficient self-command to address me.

"Major Thornton," he said, "I should be happy were I suffered to look on this visit as a prelude to the return of that good understand-

ing between us, which I regret has ever been interrupted. Pray be seated."

"No, sir—in your house, never. My business with you is short, and may be settled standing. Our account has been allowed to run too long, and the balance has become a large one. It must now be wiped off."

"If you allude to anything pecuniary,—the fortune of your sister,—I am always ready——"

"No. Such matters I leave to the law. I come, as the brother of a wife, whom your brutal outrage has driven to madness, to bring you to a reckoning of a different sort."

Weak and irritable as I was become from long and severe illness, my agitation every moment increased, and I was acted upon by impulses over which I could exercise no control. The whole volume of my blood seemed sent upwards into my brain, and I spake the words, not of reason, but of passion. Hewson saw my emotion, for my whole frame shook with it.

"I do not understand you, sir," he replied. "If your intentions are hostile towards me, you could not presume to violate the sanctuary of my own house?"

“ Yes, the sanctuary of God’s house ; and were you snatched from my living vengeance, even the sanctuary of the grave. I would go there, even for the sake of trampling on the corrupting remains of a scoundrel.”

“ Sir, I will bear such language from no man, and least of all in my own house ;” rising at the same time, and hastily approaching the bell, as if to ring for assistance.

I intercepted him, and pushing him back, produced a small pair of pistols from the pocket of my greatcoat, which, after he retired, I threw upon the table.

“ You will not bear it ! I congratulate you. I rejoice to be spared further experiments on the limits of your sufferance. There, sir—the means of redress are before you. Take one of these pistols, and use it with the spirit of a man.”

The face of the craven grew pale as death.

“ Are you aware of the consequences of such mad and bloodthirsty conduct ?” he asked, in a voice with some tremor in it. “ You are bound over to keep the peace in a large penalty.”

“ Were I bound in penalty of my salva-

tion," I interrupted, " the bond should be estreated. It is only because I know from your conduct, that you want courage to meet me in the field, that I am forced thus to deal with you. Will you fight? Speak—is there even one dormant spark of courage in your heart?"

" I will not fight,—not now, at least,—not in this manner, and without witnesses."

" Nay, nay," I answered, " think on it again. Do not suffer yourself to be buffeted and spit upon—to be proclaimed a coward in the highway."

I took the pistols from the table, and advancing close up to him, as he stood the figure of a corpse, and holding them by the muzzle, extended them towards him. He shrunk back.

" Villain, miscreant, despicable coward! you can wreak your brutal ferocity on a weak and helpless *woman*—outrage the sanctity of her pure, and innocent, and confiding heart, and goad her, till, in the very madness you have caused, she finds a refuge from your inhuman persecution! How does your dastard spirit shrink before a *man*! How tamely and sub-

missively do you now stand, trembling before me, bearing contumelies which you *dare not* resent! Raise my opinion of human nature, let me not believe the earth holds a reptile so vile and so degraded! Take a pistol, and signalize a life of vice and meanness, by at least one faint glimmering of manhood."

I again extended the pistols towards him, and he took one.

"Hah, this is well. I will cross the apartment, and the signal to fire shall be given by you."

I turned about for this purpose, but had scarcely gone a pace or two, when he fired. The bullet passed through the collar of my coat, but without injuring me, and lodged in the opposite wainscot. When I turned round, he had flown to the bell, and was ringing furiously for assistance.

"Vile and wretched assassin!" I exclaimed, "I will not defraud the gibbet of its prey; I will not fire on a thing so utterly despicable," and hurling my pistol, with all my strength, at his head, it struck him on the mouth, and dashed out several of his teeth. Just then the door

opened, and servants entered the apartment: I lost no time in quitting the hated roof, and returned to my carriage.

The occurrence I have just described, would undoubtedly have forfeited my recognizances; but Hewson was too conscious of his own turpitude, to take any steps which might elicit the particulars of his dastardly conduct.

I found Willoughby waiting my arrival, and I related to him those particulars of my interview with Hewson, of which the reader is already in possession. I had brought him with me, because I foresaw that circumstances might have occurred, in which the presence of a friend might have been necessary. Now there was no occasion to impose a further burden on his kindness, and on the following morning we parted; he to return to Middlethorpe, I to proceed on a melancholy errand, in which the society, even of Willoughby, would have been painful.

It was to visit the poor unhappy Jane, that I now bent my footsteps. A shuddering came over me, at the thought of the sad condition in which I was about to behold her. I, too, had

been unfortunate, but when I compared my situation with her's,—the burden under which my stronger shoulders had bent, with that which had pressed her fragile frame to the earth, I felt as if I had been guilty of ingratitude in repining at my fate. In duration, if not in intensity, her's had far transcended mine. Jane's had been the sufferings of years, mine but of months. My reason had survived, her's had sunk in the conflict.

During my journey, however, I thought not of myself, I remembered only Jane, and her unhappy fate. Her countenance, as it had been in former days, rose vividly in my memory. Her mild, bright, and dove-like eyes, beamed on me with more, if possible, than even a sister's love. I saw her fair, pale countenance shaded with its bright ringlets of sunny hair. The smile of joy was on her lips, as it had been when, in youthful days, she came to welcome my return. My ear drank in the silver tones of her glad voice, as I pressed her in my arms.

Such was the creature on which my memory had ever dwelt. Good God, what was she now ! Was this the desolate and deserted ma-

niae whom I was about to behold ? Oh, would that she had died ! I could have laid her in the earth, as I had laid others as dear ; but to find her thus ! My own dear, loving, and beloved sister, the inmate of a madhouse ! There may be philosophy enough to enable a man to bear such a thought, but *I* did not possess it.

Occupied by sad reflections, the hours passed slowly on, and I at length approached the object of my destination. It was a large building, situated at some distance from the road, gloomy, I thought, but perhaps this arose only from the sad associations which were linked with it. The house was surrounded by a high wall, and we drove through a massive gate, which was opened by a middle-aged man of sinister and forbidding aspect. In a large court-yard before the house, the windows of which were secured by iron bars, like those of a prison, there were a considerable number of men, some of them rather prepossessing in appearance, playing at bowls, chuckfarthing, and other games of a similar description. The passing carriage, however, seemed to arrest both the eye and attention of all, and I heard several

voices call out, "Here's another come,"—"another poor devil, to be confined as we are,"—"let us see him."

We had already stopped at the door of the house, and I had inquired for the head of the establishment, when a respectably dressed and grave-looking personage stepped up to the door of the carriage, and addressed me with those customary salutations, with which strangers in this country generally preface an attempt at conversation.

"Good morning, sir. I hope you've had a pleasant journey. Have you come far to-day? You like what you've seen of your new abode, I hope; you'll find in it very pleasant society, I assure you."

I answered, that my stay would be too short to enable me to judge of such particulars. I should probably be gone in an hour.

"Ah, sir, don't believe them," answered my grave friend, with an incredulous shake of the head. "They told me so too when I first came, but I've already been here seven years, and I now believe I shall never quit it till death." Then turning to his companions, I heard him

say as he retired, " Poor fellow, he tells me he is not going to stay above an hour or two;" and peals of maniac laughter rang loudly from his auditors.

The servant, who had been in search of the Doctor now returned, to say that he was at home; and alighting, I was shown into his presence. He was a little squinting man, dressed in black, with a powdered head, and received me with a profusion of bows. The apartment in which I found him was in character something of a non-descript. One end of it gave indication of its being a library, and displayed a book-case, the shelves of which seemed tolerably filled. Another was fitted up like the shop of an apothecary, with rows of glass bottles and gallipots, and drawers, and compartments, all duly labelled in golden letters, according to the formula of the Pharmacopeia. The sides were hung with anatomical preparations, interspersed with stuffed animals, and prints of John Hunter, Dr Boerhaave, and other eminent professors of the healing art. The most striking object on the chimney-piece was a child with two heads, preserved in spirits, flanked by sundry other spe-

cimens of *lusus naturæ* equally pleasant and interesting. Over the Doctor's table, suspended in a cage, hung a large grey parrot, and a fat and porsy poodle lay snoozing before the fire upon the rug.

On my entrance, the Doctor after a profusion of bows, requested me to be seated, displacing, at the same time, for my accommodation, a large brass pestle and mortar, which occupied the only arm-chair in the apartment. I sat for some time silent, unable, or unwilling to make the effort necessary to enter in words on so painful a subject, as that which occupied my thoughts.

"May I request, sir, at length," said the polite Doctor, "that you would be good enough to state, to what cause I am indebted for the honour of this interview."

This roused me.

"I am so unfortunate, sir, as to have a sister at present under your care. I am Major Thornton of Thornhill, in the county of —, and my sister's name is Mrs Hewson. I shall feel obliged to you to give me what information

you can, with regard to her present condition, and the prospect it affords of recovery."

"Why, Major, she is certainly better, considerably better, since she was placed under my charge," taking down at the same time a large folio volume, and turning over the leaves. "I always keep a record of the state of my patients. Let me see—brought here by Mr Hewson's housekeeper, and bailiff, on the 17th of November. Pulse quick and feverish, eye dilated, mind high, uttered loud screams when touched, raved of her brother (that's you, I suppose, Major,) and family. Bled and administered an anodyne. 18th. Same state. 19th. Symptoms the same, though somewhat diminished, and so on, I see, till the 23d of December. Change of symptoms, great depression, eye sunk and heavy, no appetite, never speaks. Prescribed change of diet, fifty drops of Tinct. vol. Valer., to be taken three times a-day, diluted in water. All January no change. 12th of February, higher than usual, talks much and loud, seems frightened at some object she imagines to be before her; let me see, this continues till the 19th. Spirits again low, rejects food, was observed

yesterday to shed tears, and since that time to the present, no material change has taken place."

Having extracted all the information I could from the Doctor, with regard to poor Jane's condition, I next desired to see her, and that the interview should be without witnesses. The feelings with which I regarded the approaching meeting may be conceived, but not expressed. I was conducted by a matronly and respectable-looking woman through long passages, in our progress along which, the loud shriek of madness, and voices hideously discordant, reached my ear.

We at length entered a chamber, where, seated at the window, from which she looked with a vacant gaze, I beheld Jane. She was paler, and thinner, than when I had last seen her, and I missed those beautiful ringlets, by which till now her countenance had ever been shaded and adorned. She did not turn her head as I entered, nor change the direction of her eyes, and I stood some time gazing upon her, before she saw me.

At length I was observed, and with a look that betrayed something of fear, she sprang

from her seat. I had now a full view of her face. Not a feature had lost its beauty. Even the eyes were the same, but there was resulting from the whole—an indescribable change of expression, for which, from mere examination of the features, it would have been difficult to account. Jane looked on me, but evidently without recognition.

“Oh, Jane!” I exclaimed, approaching her as I spoke, “Do you not know me?”

She started back from me with a slight scream.

“Do not fear, Jane,” I went on, “it is Cyril—it is your brother, who has come to embrace you. Will you not welcome him?”

Her eyes, which till now, notwithstanding my presence, had been wandering and unsettled, were fixed stedfastly upon me, as if scrutinizing the truth of my assertion, by a survey of my person. At length, bursting into a laugh, every note of which pierced me like a dagger, she exclaimed—

“No, no, you think I’m mad, and therefore I’ll believe anything. You Cyril Thornton,—

You my brother, you, you !" and again the chamber rung with her laugh.

" Oh, yea, Jane, I am your brother—your unhappy brother ; do you not remember my voice, the happy days of our childhood, how on summer evenings we roamed together in the Cromer wood, and with my brother Charles, who died by my hand, we knelt side by side at the knee of our angel mother, to receive her blessing ere we retired to rest, with innocent and happy hearts ?"

The scenes which I wished to recall to her memory, rushed back with overwhelming force upon my own. The tears fell fast from my eyes, and I could not proceed. Jane looked on me again, if possible, with a keener gaze than before, as if half hesitating in her belief.

" No, no," she at length exclaimed, " I will not,—cannot believe it. What a creature are you to tell me you are Cyril Thornton ! Well do I remember his fair face, and his glad blue eyes, and do you, with that scarred and hideous visage, declare you are my brother ? Go. You are gaunt and haggard, and hateful to look upon ;

get from my sight, you cannot deceive me. I am not mad enough."

Her countenance flushed up with anger as she spoke, and the brilliance of passion shone in her eyes. She averted her head when she had done speaking, as if the sight of me aroused unpleasant feelings; but when she turned it again, and saw that I still stood unmoved before her, she stamped in vehement passion, with her small and beautiful foot upon the floor.

"Begone, I say, why do you still haunt me with your frightful presence? Go—I am *not* your sister; my brother is not mutilated as you are, his face is a fair and a happy one; but I shall never see him more. He knows not that his sister is confined in a common madhouse. No, no, he is far away, or they durst not keep me here."

Glad was I to behold the tears that sprung into her eyes, for, as I saw them, my heart whispered to me, "there is yet hope."

"Jane, dearest Jane, do not turn thus from a brother, to whom you are dearer than his life-blood. True, I am sadly changed since you last saw me. Look at this scar upon my face; it is by

this,—by deep sorrow, and by long and grievous sickness, that my countenance has been changed. I have been in the wars; you know I was a soldier—my arm too is gone—I am but a wreck of what you remember me; but believe me, Jane, I have brought home a heart that loves you fondly as ever, an arm that, while life remains, will protect you. Nay, doubt me not. I will tell you of old times,—of our mother,—our father,—Charles, and little Lucy, the delight of all our hearts. I will speak to you of Thornhill—of the swans upon the little lake—their nest on its woody island, and the bower that Charles and I built for you on its margin. I will recall to you the happy hours that we spent in the summer-house on the hill, where our young eyes used to gaze with wonder and delight upon the setting sun, and the sound of your sweet music often mingled with the song of the nightingale. Do you see those tears, Jane? Do you hear the choking utterance, with which I speak to you of days of happiness now long gone by? Do you see how this hand trembles, as I stretch it towards you, and do you still doubt that I am Cyril, the brother whom you love, and by whom you are be-

loved, and who swears, as there is a God in heaven, never, never, to forsake you?"

"Oh, yes," she exclaimed, "you are indeed Cyril! I remember your voice—I know you now," and she fell forwards upon my bosom. I clasped her with my arm, and pressed her half lifeless form to my heart, kissing as she lay her pale and motionless lips.

She soon recovered, but a long silence ensued, which I wished not to interrupt. Wrong, indeed, was I, when I said there was no joy in store for me in this world. Never, even in my happiest days, did I experience a moment of more exquisite delight, than that in which Jane recognised me for her brother, and fell into my arms. It was a joy so pure, and unalloyed by earthly dross, as even beatified spirits might have partaken of, without contamination of their purer nature.

When she again opened her eyes, and cast them on the face that was bent over hers, it seemed as if doubt had again seized her, for she pushed me rudely back, and recoiled from my embrace.

"Nay, I am deceived; this is not the face of

Cyril ; wretch that you are, thus to torture the heart of a poor mad creature. Speak—speak again, that I may hear your voice ; but dare not to impose on one so desolate and friendless,—for God, who is the shield of the helpless, the friend of those that have no friend on earth, the husband of the widow, the father of the shivering orphan, from whose protection even the poor maniac is not an outcast,—*He* will avenge my cause, and visit cruelty and falsehood like yours with a terrible punishment.”

Again I spoke to her of old times, and again she was calm, and knew me for her brother. She clasped me in her arms, and, dropping her head upon my shoulder, wet my bosom with her tears.

“ You will take me from this hateful house, —you have not come to me, again to forsake me—you will not leave me to the care of cold and heartless strangers. True, I am mad, but I am harmless,—why, oh why should I be confined in a place like this ? Why am I debarred from the pure air of Heaven, from the sight of the clear blue sky ? Why am I not suffered to roam on the green meadow, or sit by the purl-

ing brook, as we were wont in the days of childhood, listening to the blackbird in the bush, and the ring-dove in the tree? Why am I shut out from all that is gay and beautiful in the world, immured by dark walls, with terrible voices in my ear, and glared upon by frightful faces? Oh! if you *are* my brother, you will not leave me here. Never would Cyril have suffered a rude hand to touch me; were *he indeed* here, I should be safe,—I know—I know I should.”

“Be calm, my dear,—my beloved Jane; agitate not your mind with vain fears. Not all earth’s treasures, or Heaven’s blessedness, would tempt me to forsake you. Not long shall you remain an inmate of this house. You shall return to Thornhill—you shall once more wander on the meadows and in the wood, and sit by the side of the brook that murmurs through the shady glen, downwards to the fair Severn. Never shall your person be profaned by the touch of rude hands, and no voice, save that of kindness, and of love, shall meet your ear.”

Unused as poor Jane had been to tenderness, my words, and perhaps the deep feeling that

governed my voice, seemed to produce a strange revulsion of her frame. I supported her to a seat, and she remained pale, and with closed eyes, and motionless, save a scarcely perceptible quivering of her lips. I sat at her feet, with her hand clasped in mine, but not venturing to interrupt by speech the current of her emotion. At length she opened her eyes, and rising, but still holding her hand, I again addressed her.

“ Endeavour to collect your mind, my poor Jane, and listen to me. Though it is necessary that I quit you now, think not that I have forsaken you. I go only to prepare for your deliverance. Believe me, though you see him not, that your brother is active in your cause.— Scarcely shall these eyes know sleep, or these limbs rest, till he beholds you once more in your father’s house. Be calm, my dearest sister ; think not you are friendless and forsaken while I live. Farewell—and may the blessings of a God, infinitely merciful, rest upon you.”

I kissed her lips, and pressed her to my bosom as I spoke, but she remained still as marble till I had quitted the apartment. The ma-

tron, who had formerly conducted me, stood waiting at the door, which she immediately locked. A loud shriek reached me as I retrod the long passage, and the words—"My God, has he forsaken me!" thrilled through the very marrow of my bones.

I again saw the Doctor before I departed, and directed that poor Jane should be treated with every kindness till my return, holding out, at the same time, a promise of reward if I found my instructions were complied with. The Doctor having solemnly engaged it should be so, I stepped into the carriage, and quitted the melancholy mansion.

The horses' heads were turned towards Thornhill, and my journey was made as rapidly as possible. As I approached, the house appeared deserted, no smoke rose from the chimneys, and the windows of the principal apartments were closed. I had given no intimation of my coming, and of course was not expected. In the place, too, all those little observances, and that attention to minute adornment which indicates the presence of the master, had been neglected. The gravel roads were over-run with weeds,

and as the carriage stopped, I remarked, the steps that led to the vestibule were covered with grass. The door-bell was rung, and though its hollow tinkle was heard reverberating through the empty chambers of the mansion, no servant came at the summons. Again and again was the signal repeated, and with similar success. The opening and closing of distant doors was at length heard, the sound of footsteps approached, the key grated in the lock, and I stood again beneath the roof of my fathers.

The door was opened by a house-maid, who, on learning my name, soon ran off to spread the news in the distant apartments occupied by the servants. The old housekeeper, who had been dismissed by my stepmother, had since been restored to her office, and soon came bustling forward to welcome my arrival, and make a thousand apologies for my reception.

Thomas Jones, a grey-headed footman, was, in the present case, made the scape-goat for the rest of the establishment. Thomas, it seemed, was good for nothing, he was grown old and stupid, and thought only of smoking and guzzling ale, in the public-house of the village. It

was Thomas's duty, she said, to have opened the door, but Thomas, as usual, was not forthcoming, and if Marjory, the house-maid, had not accidentally heard the bell, we might have rung till doomsday. I told Mrs Parkyns, for so the good housekeeper was called, to give herself no concern about a matter of so little importance, and requesting a fire in the library, and dinner to be got ready as soon as possible, I crossed the park to the house of old Humphreys, with whom I wished to have a short interview.

He was at home, and I explained to him my views with regard to the preparations that might be necessary for the reception of my sister Jane at Thornhill. Poor old man ! He was shocked at the change in my appearance, but more deeply so at the intelligence I gave him of the melancholy condition of my poor sister ; and it was with a sad though zealous heart that he entered on the duties of the task assigned him.

On my return, I found the household had not been idle during my absence. A huge fire was blazing in the library, and old Thomas gave proof of having returned to his duty, by receiving me in the hall. As I passed through it,

melancholy memorials met my eye. There was my father's hat hanging on its accustomed peg, his gold-headed cane yet stood in the corner, beside his long silver-tipped riding-whip, with which, I well remembered, he had once beat me when a boy.

Dinner was speedily announced as ready, but I did not partake of it, till I had dispatched a letter to William Lumley, requesting him to meet me at Thornhill as soon as possible. This done, the shelves of the library, and my own reflections, afforded me abundant occupation, if not amusement, till I retired to rest.

CHAPTER XII.

Oh ! I have lost a sister,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age,
For her perfections.

Hamlet.

It was some days before Lumley arrived. The mornings I spent partly in business, and partly in visiting the haunts of my youth, and such of the old tenants as had survived the lapse of years since my departure.

When Lumley came, I explained to him all the particulars of Jane's situation, and my own determination to take instant measures for removing her to Thornhill, and getting her definitively placed, beyond the reach or influence of Hewson. In effecting this, he appeared to anticipate no difficulty. Hewson's character gave every reason to suppose, that he would be glad of any scheme, by which he would be relieved

from the expense of the maintenance of his wife. But, in the event of his refusal, Lumley advised that steps should instantly be taken, to obtain, both for her person and fortune, the protection of Chancery. If possible, however, this step was to be avoided ; and I authorised Lumley to propose, that if Hewson would consent to give up all right to the custody of his wife's person, that not only, no demand should be made on him for her support, but that he should be suffered to enjoy the life-rent of her fortune.

In case of his refusing this offer, Lumley was to apprise him, that a petition on her behalf would immediately be filed in Chancery, which would involve the consequence of his being instantly compelled to refund her fortune, a necessity which, embarrassed in pecuniary matters as he was, could not fail to be abundantly unpleasant. Armed with these powers, Lumley lost no time in departing to seek an interview with Hewson, and I awaited his return at Thornhill, with the deepest anxiety for the event. All went as we expected. Hewson, who never lost sight of his own interest, made no difficulty in accepting the

proposal, and Lumley brought with him the necessary legal documents, duly executed.

Once more, and under happier circumstances, I returned to my poor sister. On my arrival, I had an interview with the Doctor, settled all his demands, and did not visit poor Jane, until I was apprised that every preparation was made for our departure.

Since I had quitted her, the Doctor informed me, the symptoms of her mental disorder had varied considerably, both in character and intensity. Sometimes she had been calm and collected, expressing her confidence in my love, and reliance on my promises. At others, she had been wild and violent, accusing me of having forsaken her, and then sinking into the deep lethargy of despair. As we approached the door, I heard her (it was impossible I could mistake her voice,) singing a wild and melancholy song.

She stopped as the sound of the key turning in the lock, informed her of our approach. She was at the other end of the apartment when I entered, and screaming as she beheld me, she rushed forward, as if to cast herself in my arms,

but ere she reached me—fell senseless on the floor.

I raised her gently, and carried her to a couch, on which I seated myself, with her head resting on my bosom. She lay there without motion ; once—once only, she opened her eyes, but their gaze was vacant. Then closing them, she breathed one long sigh—it was her last.

Assistance was immediately procured, and a vein opened, but without effect ; my beloved and unhappy sister was unhappy no longer.

For some time I remained kneeling by the couch, on which the lifeless remains lay extended. I closed her eyes. I crossed her white hands upon her bosom, and as I did so, her marriage-ring caught my eye. " Accursed symbol !" I exclaimed, as I drew it from her finger, and dashed it on the ground ; " last and only memorial of a hateful and unhappy union, of chains, which death at length has rent asunder, instrument of cruelty and baseness, begone ! I cast thee from me, to furnish food for the famishing beggar, or to be trodden under foot by villains, less mean than he, by whose hands thou wert bestowed."

It was with a solemn calmness of heart, that

I imprinted the last kiss, on the lips of my departed sister, and turned to behold her no more. Her death cost me no tear. What, alas, was there to weep for, in the scene I had been contemplating? Not surely that a creature had been snatched from life, to whom life could have brought but suffering—that she, whose only refuge was death, had found it. No. It was with dry eyes that I sprang into the carriage, and as I journeyed homewards, my heart, though awed by the merciful demonstration of divine Power that had passed before me, was calm.

The body was conveyed to Thornhill, and I laid the head of another of my family in the grave. Four had been already sepulchred—two had died in my arms—and cut off, as I was, from all the enjoyments of life, the prayer rose within me, that *I* might be the fifth. Yet the last solemn offices of religion were not heard in a cold and repining spirit, and it was with an humble and a chastened heart, that I turned once more from the dead to the living.

After the funeral, I remained about a month at Thornhill, in solitude and comparative tran-

quillity. My mind, I think, had already assumed a somewhat healthier tone, for I was able calmly to deliberate, on my future plans. The doctors told me it was necessary that I should seek a warmer climate, and my own feelings told me so too. I felt convinced, that to remain in England was to die, yet I felt an invincible aversion to foreign travel. I could not loiter up and down the world, sick, spiritless, forlorn, seeking health, yet carrying disease, a wandering stranger in a strange land, to become at last the tenant of a foreign grave. Better than this, I thought it were to die at home, to mingle my ashes with those of my fathers, to sleep in death with those whom I loved in life, to be incorporated with kindred earth. But best of all it was, to die as a soldier. If death will not be cheated of his victim, rather let me fall in the field, than falter out my feeble spirit in the slow languishing of a sickbed. Who so brave as he for whom life retains no charm? Where was the danger from which I would now shrink? What peril was there, which my heart would now flutter to encounter? To such a termination of my life, I found pleasure in looking forward. My soul

revolted from the idea of dying in a corner; like Ajax, I would at least perish in the light of day.

My resolution, therefore, was decidedly taken, at all events, to return to the army. It was true, there was little prospect of my health being sufficiently restored, to enable me successfully to encounter the fatigues of a campaign; but I would at least make the effort; it could cost nothing, for death, come as it might, was a cheap remedy and efficacious one.

Before I quitted England, however, I determined, once more, to visit my uncle. I felt that to quit England, without bidding him farewell, would be unkind—ungrateful. The old man loved me, and me alone of all his family, and there is something flattering in being the sole object of attachment, even to the meanest of God's creatures. Little suited as we were, to each other, from dissimilarity both of age and pursuits, I felt strongly grateful for the warmth of his regard. At first, I thought of making Lucy the companion of my journey, but on reflection, I abandoned the idea. The *menage* of my uncle, I well knew, was not calculated for

the reception of a lady, and Lucy's presence, I feared, might cause more bustle and derangement in the establishment, than might well comport with that quiet and regular routine, to which the old gentleman was accustomed.

Having completed my arrangements at Thornhill, I returned, for a few days, to Middlethorpe, to bid adieu to Lucy, and my kind friends, before starting for the north. Since poor Jane's death I had not seen her. When we met, she was pale and sad. The loss of her dear sister, under circumstances of misfortune so peculiar, following the agitation, of which I had been the unhappy cause, had proved too much for her spirits—gay as they naturally were—and she had sunk under it. It is in a creature of her happy temperament, that sorrow stands out in strongest relief. It shows, like a dark shadow in the sunshine, more gloomy, from the contrast of the surrounding light. I felt much for poor Lucy, yet I did not waste words in attempting to comfort her. I told her not, to dry her tears, for I knew, that for such grief, time brings the only balm. Yet my tears mingled

with her's, for I remembered, as I gazed on her, that we were now the last of all our race.

At length I set forth upon my journey; but travelling by easy stages, it was not until the fifth day, that I beheld the high black towers and spire of the Cathedral, overtopping the dense volumes of vapour that lay spread like a canopy above the city. Glasgow had evidently received a great increase of population since I had last seen it. The dirty and miserable suburbs by which it is surrounded, now extended a mile or two farther into the country, and the smoke of innumerable coal-works and factories, which had sprung up on all hands, infused a new and uncalled for pollution into the atmosphere.

In the character and appearance of the city, little apparent change had taken place. The crowd and bustle in the streets had perhaps increased, but altogether the place was precisely as dirty, dingy, and detestable, as I remembered it of yore. The carriage stopped at the Buck's Head; and I remembered the jolly dowager, who received me smiling on the landing place. I was shown into the very apartment I had oc-

cupied ten years before, and again looked out upon the same scene of business and bustle, which had then arrested my attention, and of which the impression was yet uneffaced.

With what dull uninterested feelings did I again behold it ! I regarded the beings I saw moving before me, as belonging to a different species. I had nothing with them in common. I had never felt the stimulus, by which all around me were so powerfully actuated. Love of gain had never been the motive, of any thought or action of my life. True, I had been a slave, but it was not to Mammon.

I might probably have philosophised on the scene around me, had not the current of my thoughts been diverted into another channel, by observing the words " Cyril Thornton, 13th September 1802," scratched on a window-pane, in a half schoolboy hand. The characters were my own. I did not remember to have written them, but there they still remained—a memorial of former days.

Lightly did my memory at that moment pass over the intervening years, as it returned to call back the thoughts and feelings of the time

when these characters were traced. I had then known but one sorrow, and though I had for a time bent under it, the elastic spring of youth had speedily rebounded, and the winds carried with them the cloud, which, in passing, had cast its shadow on my spirit. Alas! the boy of one grief, had become the man of many.

The train of sombre reflection, into which memory was about to lead me, was interrupted by the entrance of the landlady, who politely curtsying, inquired whether I was to remain her inmate for the night. Till that moment I had not given the subject a thought, and looking at my watch, I found it was already evening. My uncle's dinner hour was past, and it was, I thought, on the whole, better to delay my visit till the following morning. I therefore declared myself stationary in the Buck's Head till the next day, and feeling at the moment a more proximate and cogent want, than that of sleep, for during my day's journey I had tasted no refreshment, I requested a sight of the bill of fare.

"Bill o' fare," replied the jolly and facetious dowager, "troth that's puttin' the cart before

the horse, for ye maun hae your fare first, and syne it will be time enough, to speer for the bill."

"Perhaps you do not understand me, or it may not be your custom in Scotland, to keep one."

"I understand you weel aneuch, Major, and it's what you fine Englishmen often ea' for; but I never trouble mysel' to put pen to paper about the matter, for I was aye glegger at the speaking than the writing; and weel I wat, a supple tongue comes better speed than the best pen that ever came out o' a goose. You'll be for soup, I'se warrant; and there's baith stot's tail and hare-soup in the house, besides barley-broth, gin ye like that better. Then, in the way o' fish, there's haddocks, partins, and herrings, fresh from the Broomielaw. For meat, ye can hae a chop, a stake, or a nice veal cutlet, for ye'll maybe no like to wait for the roasting o' a joint; or ye can get a spatch-cock made o' a chicken in ten minutes. Then there's game, patricks or muirfowl, wham o' them ye like best; and gin ye like nane o' thae things, I daursay there's mair in the house, though I canna just mind them at the present moment."

I assured her there was not the smallest occasion to tax her memory any further, and made my selection from the delicacies, of which she had already indicated, the local habitation and the name.

This dispatched, the pursy matron appeared still further inclined, to indulge in a little conversation, and instead of quitting the apartment, advanced to the bell, and ringing it, a waiter answered to the summons, to whom she issued orders, for the speedy preparation of my repast. For my own part, I did not object to continuing the conversation, for it amused me, and I was glad of any resource, to escape from the gloom of my own solitary meditations.

“ May I take the freedom to ask, Major, if ye’re going to the Highlands to shoot, or if ye’re come on a toorin’ expedition, as they ca’t, to Staffa, or the Trosachs, as is noo a’ the fashion wi’ you gentlemen o’ the south ?”

I answered, that neither of her conjectures were right, and that I had no intention of proceeding farther north than Glasgow.

“ Maybe, then, ye’re come on a visit to some gentleman in the neighbourhood ; it will be ei-

ther to Pollock House, or Cumbernauld, or Blythswood, or I daursay——”

“No,” interrupted I, “it is a gentleman of your city, who is the object of my visit. Do you know old David Spreull?”

“That’s a daft-like question, Major, to speer at onybody in this town. Ken David Spreull! I wonder wha, within thirty miles o’ the Heigh Kirk, doesna ken him? He’s a man o’ mair siller than ony in the hail county of Lanrick, though that’s a wide word, Major. But surely ye’re no come on a visit to him—at least ye’re no thinkin’ o’ pittin’ up at his house? It’s now twenty years since I came frae the Black Boy in the Gallowgate, to the Buck’s Head, and no yae stranger, in a’ that time, has ever found back and manger wi’ David Spreull.”

“How is the old gentleman?” I asked; “hale and stout, I hope, and bearing his declining years as lightly as can be expected?”

“Atweel, Major,” replied my landlady, glancing, at the same time, at her own portly and capacious figure, “time tells upon us a’. For my part, I think I get fatter and sonsier every year o’ my life, though, to be sure, I’m a hantle

younger than Mr Spreull; but he, puir man, seems just dwindling awa' to a perfect atomy. It's no aboon a month sin' I saw him hirple past on the Trongate, for he still gangs on foot when the weather's gude, baith to the countin'-house and the coffeeroom; there he was, hirplin awa' wi' his staff in his nieve, naething mair nor less than a rickle o' banes. It's easy aneuch seen he's no lang for this world."

The arrival of a carriage put a stop to the dialogue, and the loquacious landlady bustled down stairs to receive her new guests, with as much celerity of motion, as lay within the scope of her volition to communicate, to the voluminous mass of matter, by which she was encumbered.

Dinner was duly served, and after spending a quiet and solitary evening, I retired to bed. On the following morning, after breakfast, having lounged an hour or two in an arm-chair, from a dread, perhaps, of a scene, which would scarcely fail to bring with it some painful emotion, I set out for the residence of my uncle.

CHAPTER XIII.

I am old, I am old. I love thee better than e'er a scurvy young boy of them all.

Henry IV.

That is not forgot
Which ne'er I did remember; to my knowledge,
I never in my life did look on him.

Winter's Tale.

As I walked through the well-known streets which led from the Trorgate to my uncle's residence, I recognised, as old friends, the picturesque, dark, and somewhat venerable-looking buildings by which they were flanked. The external crust of smoke, which coated their surface, had been somewhat deepened since I had last seen them; in other respects, I could detect no change. The names, indeed, on the large signboards, displayed in front of the houses, I thought, were generally different from those which had formerly become familiar to my eye. In some cases, I knew this to be so, for several

names, which yet lingered on my memory, were gone.

The dwelling of my uncle soon came in sight, and on that alone, my gaze was rivetted. I paused right in front of it, and looked up to the windows, endeavouring, if possible, to catch a glimpse of its inmates. There were none visible. I knew my uncle's parlour, but the window-panes were so deeply embrowned by smoke and dust, as to baffle the penetration of the keenest eye.

For a few minutes, I stood thus occupied, then slowly crossing the street, ascended the well-remembered stair, and reached the landing-place. Here I again paused, as if in a momentary fit of irresolution, with the raised knocker in my hand, which I wanted courage to let fall. My uncle's name was still, though not without difficulty, legible on the brass-plate, and bade fair soon to be entirely erased by the friction of the brick-dust, with which, for so many years, it had been daily brightened by the fingers of the housemaid. No paint had touched the door since my departure, and age had told

on that, as it had done on the living inhabitants within.

At length the knocker fell. The sound, I thought, was a hollow and a mournful one, and I waited, not without some palpitation, for an answer to my signal. After some time, the door was opened, and I bent a keen glance on the countenance, which presented itself to my view. It was not that of Girzy, and had it even been Jenny's, it could not, I thought, have escaped my memory. But the person that awaited my demands, though not Jenny, was clearly another individual, belonging to the same variety of species. She was dirty as her predecessor, like her was without shoes or stockings, and wore on her head, a soiled and rumpled *mutch*, the flaps of which hung down like dog's-ears on either side of a countenance, evidently not often washed, but to which all the cosmetics in the world could have lent no charm.

The damsel, to whom my minute examination of her person, appeared by no means pleasing, soon lost patience, and was the first to break silence, holding the door scarcely half

open as she spoke, and eyeing me somewhat askance.

“ Weel, sir, what do ye want ?”

“ Is Mr Spreull at home ?”

“ Ay, he’s at hame,” replied she, still guarding the aperture of the door, and not at all offering to open it for my admission.

“ Then I wish to see him.”

“ Naebody can see him the day, for he’s no weel, and in his bed.”

“ Not seriously ill, I hope ?”

“ I kenna what ye ca’ sariously ; but he’s been laid on the braid o’ his back sin’ last Wednesday come aucht days, and Doctor Cleghorn comes to veesit him aye yince, and sometimes twice, i’ the day.”

“ Is Girzy within ? I should like to speak with her.”

“ No, she’s no in the now.”

“ Will she be long absent ?”

“ I dinna ken, but it’s no likely she’ll be outlang. She’s gane to the market in the Candle-rigs, for a howtowdy to the maister’s denner, and to get some pheesic for him at the laboraw-tory.”

"Then I shall wait her return; show me into the parlour."

She whom I addressed appeared to hesitate about the propriety of acceding to this unexpected proposal, and still remained holding the door, as if unwilling to admit me.

"Ye had better gang awa the now," was the inhospitable answer; "and gin ye're passin', ye may just gie anither ca' in hauf an hour, for I've nae orders to admit onybody."

I was not, however, thus to be rebuffed, and without more parley, advanced to affect an entrance. The damsel did not think it necessary to carry measures of resistance so far as to shut the door in my face, and she retreated slowly before me to open the parlour door, muttering, as she went,—“I'se warrant, Girzy will be the death o' me for lettin' him in.” I entered the parlour, and the maid, sulkily slamming the door after her, left me to my own reflections.

I looked round the well-known chamber, and remembrances of the past came thick and fast upon me. There was my uncle's arm-chair by the fire. That, too, was a veteran in the service, and the stuffing protruded at many aper-

tures, which time and use had worn in the covering. Sofa, table, (many a good bowl of punch had I drank on it,) carpet, chairs, book-case, grate and gardevin,—there were separate memories attached to all of these, and they rose upon me tumultuously, and at once.

The room was cold and chilly, for winter had already set in, and there was no fire. I walked to the window, and looked out upon the street. There, all was bustle. There, I beheld the scene of activity and business, amid which, he who now lay sick and solitary in his chamber, had spent a long and anxious life. *Cui bono?* To accumulate wealth, which he could not enjoy, to die unloved, unregretted, and neglected by all—but me.

I turned from the window, and approached the book-case. There stood my old friends, the well-remembered volumes; but his library, since I had last seen it, had received considerable additions. These were chiefly religious. Among them I recognised Leighton's Works and Halliburton's, Watts on Devotion, Baxter's Call, and several others, which, from the hasty glance I threw over their pages, appeared to contain

much of mystical divinity. I presumed, from this circumstance, that the mind of my uncle had become more tinged with religion than formerly. My reveries were just then interrupted by the sound of voices in the passage, and I overheard the following dialogue :—

“There’s a gentleman in the parlour wantin’ to see you.”

“A gentleman wantin’ to see me ! The lass is surely demented ; wha is’t ?”

“I kenna wha he is ; but he speaks like the Englishers, and didna seem very gleg at the up-take o’ what I tell’t him. He first spier’t for the maister, but when he fand he couldna see him, he askit for you, and though I tell’t him ye wasna at hame, naething wad fen him, but waitin’ in the parlour till ye cam back, and in he gaed, in spite o’ a’ that I could say.”

“Troth, whaever he be, he’s no blait to come rampagin’ in folk’s hooses, whether they wull or no. I daursay it’s just that glaikit neerdoweel creature Baldy Shortridge, that they’ve been makin’ a bailie o’. Bonny on sic bailies ! Ever syne he married that muckle tawpy Tammy Spreull, he’s been a perfect torment wi’ his ca’, ca’, ca’ in

at a' times, and at a' hoors, in houp o' a legacy. But he may just as weel stay at hame, I can tell him that; and I'll take care, frae this day, that he never gets his ugly neb ayont the door. Let me ben to him; I'se warrant, I'll send him awa' wi' a flea in his lug."

These last words had scarcely reached my ear, when the door opened, and with a stately step, and most vinegar aspect, Girzy stalked into the apartment. She was evidently somewhat put out, when her eye first rested on a person very different from the one she expected to encounter. She stared at me for a few moments without any symptom of recognition, and while she was thus engaged, I looked on her not without interest. Girzy was still a hale woman, and her years sat lightly upon her, though there were more wrinkles in her cheek, and deeper furrows in her brow than formerly.

I held out my hand to the old woman.

"Girzy," I said, "I am glad to see you; do you not know me?"

"It's no very likely, I should ken yin I never saw in a' my life, till this blessed minute."

"Yes, Girzy, you have seen him often. I am Cyril Thornton."

"Ceeral Thornton! It's no possible. Gin ye're Ceeral Thornton, my een's good for nae-thing; but ye speak like him too. Stop till I put on my specs. Waes me, but I ken you now,—atweel, ye're just him after a' ;" and, running up to me, she threw her arms about my neck, while tears, and a most discordant blubber, somewhat like the grunting of a pig, spoke the depth of her emotion. I did my best to shorten this unpleasant part of the scene, and after a kind expression or two, inquired for my uncle, and intimated a wish to know the particular character of his disorder, but it was some time before I could elicit an answer.

"Dear me," she ejaculated, "I never wad hae kent ye," releasing her grasp, and eyeing me from top to toe. "Oh, but it gies me a sair heart to look at ye. Lord saf us, but ye've lost yin o' yer arms. Cuttit clean off by the oxtter, as I'm a living woman!" Here the tears of the kind creature flowed faster than before, and her voice became inarticulate.

"Why, Girzy," I said in a cheerful voice,

“ you did not surely expect me to come back the same smooth-faced boy you remember me at College ? You know I’ve been a soldier, and, though I’ve lost an arm in fighting the French, I assure you I have come better off than many of my companions. A man in this world may meet with heavier losses, than either leg or wing, so let me pass as you find me, and tell me about my poor uncle, who, I am sorry to hear, is unwell.”

“ Ay, he’s unweel; but waes me, ye’re sair hashed about the chafts. It’s a sorrowfu’ sight to me to see ye come back sic an object. As I live by bread, and there’s a lang scaur frae yer gab to the corner o’ yer ee, just as if ye had gotten a claut wi’ the haggin knife. Bless and preserve me, was that done wi’ a swurd ? Thae French maun be perfect deevils incarnate—did ever leevin’ woman see or hear tell o’ the like o’t, for them to daur to sair ye that gait, and you sic a douce and weel-faur’d laddie—Oh, it gars me grue to think o’t.”

There was no stopping the overwhelming torrent of Girzy’s affectionate regrets, and after several ineffectual efforts, I gaye up the attempt,

and waited patiently till its strength had become somewhat exhausted.

“ I aye kent,” she proceeded, “ thae Frenchmen were a set o’ salvages, though I find now, I aye thought ower weel o’ them. Foul fa’ baith them and the mithers that bore them, and the howdies that brought them into the world, Satan’s limbs as they are. Oh, that I had twa or three o’ them here, and a good Scotch rung in my hand. Little wad I care for their swurds, ay, or their bagnets either ; and gin I didna crack their crowns, and gie some wark for Doctor Balmanno, my name’s no Girzy Black. They’re a neerdoweel race a’thegither ; and when Belzebub gets a grip o’ them, as he’s sure to do at the hinder end, gin he doesna haud them baith tight and fast, he’s a deil no worth a button. And there’s some o’ them in this toon too,” continued she, with the air of a person who suddenly recalls to memory an important fact ; “ there’s some o’ them—think o’ their impudence—in this very toon. There’s that Degveal the dancing-maister, an emigrant they ca’ him, that comes loupin’ down the street every day like a puddock, wi’ his wee cockit

hat on his head, and silk stockings on his windlestrae shanks; my certy, but he shall hae a jaw o' dirty water on his green coat and his powdered pow, the very neist time he passes this hoose. Oh, Maister Ceeral, but it's a sight o' doul to see ye come back in siccan a sair condition. What for did ye no stay at hame, instead o' gaun stravaigin' outower the warld fechtin' wi' thae French deevils, for deevils they are, and naething less?"

"But, Girzy, don't you think it would be better to let my uncle know of my arrival? he may think it unkind that I should have been so long in the house without his knowledge."

"There's maybe something in that," replied Girzy, "for he's gayan fanciful sometimes aboot sma' things, and, I daur say, it will be as weel to let him ken; but, poor man, there's a heavy heart waitin' on him, and I'm sure the sight o' you will gar him grue maist as muckle as mysel. Hech! this world is fu' o' sair trials! But just tell me afore I gang, how ye are in yer health. Oh! but there's a hantle o' hills and hows in yer chowks. Ye're poor in the flesh, and look as if ye were but silly. I'm fear't yer stomach's

no that gude, sae just tell me what ye wad like for yer dinner, and I'll get it, gin it's to be had in the coonty o' Lanrick."

I assured her that I was an old campaigner, and begged that, in the matter of catering, she would consult my uncle's taste or her own, without reference to mine.

"Weel," replied Girzy, "gin ye leave't a' to me, ye see, I'll just get what I think's best for ye in yer present weakly condition ; sae, for yae thing, ye shall hae, the day, a guid dish o' cocky-leeky, than which, Doctor Cleghorn assured me, there was naething mair disgestable to the stomach, or mair——"

Here I interrupted her, for, to say the truth, my patience began to be somewhat exhausted, and I dreaded the prolixity of the dissertation on the medicinal virtues of cocky-leeky, on which she was about to enter. "Now, do go, Girzy, to my uncle, like a good woman, as you are, and inform him of my arrival. Tell him too, Girzy, the creature you have found me," pointing as I spoke to the remains of my dilapidated arm ; "tell him I am not as I was ; for I know he loves me, and the surprise of find-

ing me so changed, may have evil influence on his health."

"Weel, I'll gang," rejoined Girzy; "but it's a sair task ye've pitten on my shouthers;" and uttering something between a sigh and a groan, she left the apartment, casting back a sorrowful glance on me as she departed.

I was again left alone, but my solitude was not long, for in the course of a few minutes Girzy re-entered the room.

"I've tell't Mr Spreull ye're here; but I'm thinkin' I've no succeeded in gettin' him to understand ony thing mair; for the moment he heard your name, and kent ye were here, he ordered me to haud my peace, and tell ye he wad be glad to see ye direckly; and when I insisted, as ye wushed, on gangin' on to tell him a' about ye, he up wi' a volume o' Erskine's Sermons, and swore he wad ding it at my head, gin I didna leave the chaumer instantly, and deliver his message to you."

On hearing this account of matters, I desired Girzy to lead the way, and followed her to my uncle's chamber.

It was with some internal trepidation that I

entered it. I found the old gentleman sitting up in bed, with his head enveloped in a red Kilmarnock night-cap, the colour of which contrasted strongly with the sallowness of his countenance. His body was clothed in a flannel jerkin, or shirt, somewhat like those worn by sailors, which reached about half way up his scraggy throat, leaving the upper part bare. As I approached him, I could detect no change of expression, no lightening up of the countenance, but he regarded me with the same grim and saturnine look, which had remained for long years imprinted on my memory. He did not at first speak, but when I approached, he stretched out his two long and bony arms, somewhat like lobster claws, and seizing the hand I extended towards him, drew me to the bed.

I sat down on it, beside him. The old gentleman continued to gaze on me for some time in silence, with one hand placed on the crown of my head, with which he gently turned it, first to one side then to the other, as if hesitating with regard to my identity, or anxious to ascertain the full extent of the metamorphosis I had undergone. At length he broke silence.

“ Cyril, I’m glad—no, God forgie me, there’s nae gladness in my heart, to see you even beneath my ain roof-tree, sae maimed and broken down.”

This was spoken hurriedly, and but for a convulsive twinge of the features, with a calm countenance. I answered, by expressing my sincere regret that the state of his health should be such as to render necessary, so close a confinement. This, however, had not the effect of changing the current of his thoughts, of which I was the engrossing object.

“ Speak na o’ me, Cyril, for little matters it what becomes o’ a withered and a barren trunk, the seasons of whose flower and fruit (alas ! when were they ?) are gone for ever. But this is a sad welcome to my poor laddie ; I’m grown weak, I fear, in mind, as weel as body ; leave me a minute in silence to myself, and I’ll soon be better.”

I did as he desired, and remained seated on the bed some minutes, silent and motionless. The old man threw himself back on his pillow, and lay with closed eyes. His features were still as those of death, but his hands afforded

evidence of the working of his spirit, by being alternately clenched and opened. After some interval, he once more raised himself in the bed, and turned his face towards me.

“ This jaw o’ sorrow, I find,” said he, once more taking me by the hand, “ is the heaviest I have long felt, and will not pass away sae soon as I thought it would hae done, frae a heart sae worn and cauldrie as mine. I look upon this, Cyril, as God’s last, as surely it is his sairest judgment upon me, in this warld. I had hoped to see you—and it has lang been to me a solitary hope, standing, as I now do, wi’ yae fit in the grave,—blythe and happy as you ance was,—kind and affectionate as I still ken ye to be. It’s lang since we parted, yet, often sin’ syne, hae I seen your black pow and laughin’ countenance baith by night and day, floatin’ like an airy vision before my e’en, rising like a thing o’ glamour, and then vanishing awa’. Like a father for an only son, hae I petitioned the Almighty, for your happiness and welfare. Ay, I hae prayed for you, when I couldna pray for mysel ; but the wind scatters the prayers o’ a sinner, and I see now that mine hae never reach-

ed the throne o' divine grace. I maun bear in my auld age the punishment o' the sins of my youth."

There were tears in the old man's eyes as he spoke, and deep dejection might be read, in his countenance and voice.

"Why, my dear uncle," I said, endeavouring to throw vivacity into my tones, in order, if possible, to raise his spirits, "this is more like mourning for a dead nephew, than welcoming a living one. I have come to see you,—to be happy with you, as I used in days of old. Pray, do not look on me as an absolute *memento mori*. Mine is something of a death's head to be sure, but though the husk be changed, you will find the kernel the same. But *you*,—I hope you are not seriously ill, and that before I have been here long, you will be able to take my arm, (for I have still one, at your service,) and walk as we used to do in the Green, or down by the sunny banks of Clyde."

I was pleased to see that the melancholy impression which my first appearance had made on him, in some degree wore off, and that his spirits were slowly remounting from the extreme

pitch of depression to which they had fallen. The conversation had continued about an hour, and I had told something of my own history, and something of that of my family, when we were interrupted by the entrance of Girzy.

“I ken naething o’ the ways o’ you red-coated offishers,” she said, addressing herself to me, “sae I just came to spier at what hoor ye wad like yer denner. It’s nae great matter about the cocky-leeky, for that will keep het by the fire lug as lang as ye like; but I maun ken afore I pit on the saumon, for that’s a mair kittle commodity, and wad a’ drap to pieces if left five minutes ower lang in the pat.”

“What cares he, you auld gowk,” answered my uncle, “aboot either yer salmon, or yer cocky-leeky? Get them at the usual hour; and, do ye hear, lay plates for twa, and rax ower my claes afore ye gang, for I’m gaun to get up directly.”

“Bless me,” replied Girzy, “but the man’s gane clean wud a’ thegither. Doctor Cleghorn, when he was here on Tuesday, tell’t baith you and me too, that ye was to keep your bed, and no think o’ gettin up for the neist week at soonest. And, ‘noo, Girzy,’ said he to me, in his

ain coothy way, as he gaed down the stair, 'dinna let that maister o' yours be getting oot o' his bed till the weather's warmer, or ye'll be haein' him laid up on yer haunds a' the lave o' the winter, and what's waur, he may be a lame-ter a' his life wi' the rheumateeze.'—'Weel, Doctor,' said I, as he raxed his leg oot ower the back o' his horse, 'depend upon't, that deil a fit shall he pit ower the door o' his chaumer, till ye come back.' Sae ye'll just lie still where ye are, and I'll get Maister Ceeral his denner in the ither room by himsel."

"Do ye offer to contradict me?" rejoined her master, apparently more irrate than the occasion required; "Doctor Cleghorn may ride to the deevil gin he likes, and if the beast carries double, he may take you on a pillion ahint him; but up I shall get this moment, so steek your gab, and lay my claes directly on the chair by the bedside."

"Ye's get nae claes to pit on the day," answered Girzy, resolutely, "sae just lie still where ye are, and be content."

The words were no sooner out of her mouth, than, after an ejaculation of anger, which I do

not deem it necessary to record, one of my uncle's long and bony legs was seen to be protruded from the bed, and he was obviously in the act of rising, to provide himself with those habiliments which the contumacy of his attendant refused to supply. It seemed as if Girzy's maidenly delicacy was somewhat outraged by this summary proceeding of the old gentleman; but whether this was so or not, it was evident, that further opposition on her part, to the resolute determination of her master, was hopeless. Like a prudent general, therefore, she thought it better to capitulate with a good grace.

"Weel, weel," said she, "it's easy kent that a wilfu' man maun hae his ain way, sae lie still where ye are, and I'll get yer claes frae the kist."

My uncle, though his eyes still glittered with passion, complied with this desire, and slowly withdrew the gaunt and unshapely limb, which had thus succeeded in frightening Grizy into her propriety. She was clearly determined, however, to have at least the privilege of a little talk, as she performed the unwelcome office of arranging her master's integuments by the bed.

“Hech, sirs,” said she, addressing me, “saw ye ever the like o’ this, Maister Ceeral? there’s nae use in threapin’ wi’ him, for he’s just as deaf as Ailsa Craig to onything that copes his ain whigmaleeries.” Then turning to my uncle, “He that will to Cupar, maun to Cupar; whether will ye hae yer velveteens or corduroys?—mind it’s no my faut, gin ye’re keepit grainin’ on the bread o’ yer back for the neist twa months,—ye’ll surely clap a pair o’ gamashins on yer cuits?—Hech, but there’s thrawn folk in this warld—nae doot ye’ll wear yer flannin’ wrapper—I’ll hae a sair time o’t wi’ ye—Ye’ll be the better o’ twa couls on yer pow, for the room’s cauld—Little wad I be surprised to hae the straiken o’ yer corp afore lang, frae this daft-like proceeding.”

The caloric of my uncle’s wrath, which, during the last few minutes, had been every moment increasing in intensity, now burst forth with the vehemence of a volcano; and Girzy, as if aware of the coming explosion, prudently desisted from further irritating remark, and hastily quitted the apartment. Notwithstanding this, however, the choler of the old gentle-

man vented itself, in objurgation, loud and long, on the impudence of his attendant. Having experienced some relief from this discharge, he requested to be left alone, to perform the duties of the toilet, and I returned to the parlour.

CHAPTER XIV.

I do suspect I have done some offence,
That seems disgracious in the city's eye.

Richard III.

ON entering the sitting-chamber, I found the maid, under the superintendence of Girzy, engaged in the preparatory decoration of the dinner-table, which, on my account, was perhaps destined to display, somewhat more than its usual bravery. The latter, on my entrance, desisted from her occupation, in order to adjust what she called the cod in the easy chair, for my comfortable accommodation.

“Come yer ways,” said the matron, as I entered; “come yer ways, and crook yer hoch in the chair by the chimley lug. Oh, but ye look silly, after a’ the sair troubles ye hae gane through in foreign parts. Weel I wat, Mr Ceeral, ye hae lost a hantle o’ yer birr sin’ ye last sat in that chair. Weel, weel do I mind the time

when you and that funny callant they ca'd Conyers cam to tak' yer kail wi' us, the day before ye gae'd awa. An' what's become o' him noo? Hae thae French deevils been cuttin' and hashin' him as they have din you? Oh, ye a' gang out wi' light hearts, and fu' o' smeddom, but, waes me, what do ye come hame?"

Here the increasing huskiness of Girzy's voice gave notice that she was fast sinking into the melting mood, and unwilling again to become the subject of her pathetic lamentations, I endeavoured, by the cheerfulness of my reply, to direct the current of her ideas into another channel.

"I believe Conyers is well, Girzy. He is now a dashing major of dragoons, and I have no reason to fear that, since I last saw him, he has either been *hashed* by the French, or lost any of the *smeddom* of his younger days."

"A major o' dragoons ca' ye him! and what, I wonder, were he and his dragoons aboot, that they allooed thae rampagin' idolators the French,—for I'm tell't they worship graven images, in spite o' the commandments,—to sair you in sic a fashion, as they hae done? Had they nae

swords to help ye? What for did he no come wi' his gallopin' dragoons, to lend ye a helpin' haun when he saw ye in the grup o' the Philistines? Hech! I fear he's but a ne'er-do-weel after a', though I am loath to think it o' him."

I had some difficulty in vindicating Conyers from these unmerited imputations of Girzy, and in making her comprehend, that being, as he was, about an hundred miles distant with another branch of the army, it was scarcely reasonable to blame him, for not having seasonably appeared, to the rescue of his friend.

Our conversation, however, was soon interrupted, by the approach of my uncle. A clattering was heard along the floor of the passage, and Girzy, who was still engaged in venting her indignation, against the authors of my disfigurement, left her diatribe unfinished, and running to the door of the apartment, hastily opened it, and the old gentleman entered. He could walk with difficulty, and only by the assistance of a staff. His limbs were stiff and feeble, partly, perhaps, from the remains of an attack of acute rheumatism, under which he had recently suffered, but principally, I thought, from that most

incurable of all diseases—old age. His progress was slow, and some time elapsed before he reached the easy-chair set apart for his peculiar use, and still more before, by the aid of the sedulous Girzy, who arranged the cushions for his accommodation, he was comfortably settled in it. During this operation, the activity of her other members was at least equalled by that of her tongue.

“ Weel, ye’ve ta’en yer ain way o’t,” exclaimed she: “ but mind, whatever comes o’t, ye’ve naebody to blame but yoursell. Ye care nae mair what I say till ye, than if I was as big a tawpy as Meg there, that canna pit the dinner down right on the table.—Pit the kail at the tap, ye negleckfu’ limmer that ye are, and the saumon at the fit, as I tell’t ye.—Ay, ye may grain awa’,” continued she, taking advantage, with true oratorical promptitude, of an expression of pain to which my uncle at that moment gave utterance; “ I’se warrant, ye’ll get sma’ pity frae me, grain and pech as ye like.—The deevil’s in the woman, I declare, can ye no clap the sparrowgrass down forenent the howtowdy?—And I’ll tell Doctor Cleghorn the morn, that

this daft-like proceeding was nane o' my doing; but I'm done, and in a' time comin' I'se neither mak' nor meddle.—What for are ye stravaigin' about the room wi' that mustard-pat in yer nieve? Set it doon, I say, direckly, and draw the porter there by the fire-lug, and then gang ben to the kitchen, and comena back here without I ring for ye."

While such a continuous volume of sound was produced by Girzy, the double object of her cares and her invectives, appeared to be suffering considerable pain, from the motion which the change of his apartment had rendered necessary; but the expression of his countenance showed, that he was by no means so entirely engrossed by it, as to be unconscious either of the meaning or the prolixity of her oratorical display. At first, his rheumatic twinges appeared to follow in such rapid succession, as to leave no time in the short intervals which divided them for anything more than the application of a single emphatic expletive to the object of his wrath; but these, considered abstractedly from all ideas of decorum and propriety, as vivid though unconnected vehicles of the mental emo-

tions of the speaker, could not have been more happily chosen. They were indeed of a character so little complimentary, that even the chariest maiden might have pardonably found ground of offence, in being made the object of their personal application. Nothing, however, could be more philosophical, than the spirit with which Girzy appeared to listen to the *opprobria* of her irate master. They evidently passed by her as the idle wind, and when, by his satisfactory adjustment in the large high-backed arm-chair, the decrease of his pain enabled him to pour forth a more connected, though not less fervid strain of vituperation, she interrupted him by pushing forward his chair towards the dinner-table, exclaiming as she did so,—

“Come, just haud yer bow-wewin’, and tak yer denner, that’s gettin’ cauld on the brod wi’ waitin’ for ye. It’s a bonny like swatch o’ yer discretion ye’ve been gie’in’ Maister Ceeral the day. Weel I wat, better things might hae been expeckit frae a man o’ your years.—Come awa’, Maister Ceeral, and tak yer place forenent him. And noo,” she continued, again addressing her master, and pulling off his night-cap as she did

so, "there's your coul aff yer pow, sae just ask a blessin' and fa' to."

The suddenness of both Girzy's words and motions had evidently taken the old gentleman by surprise. He at first gazed on her with an expression, which seemed to indicate that he was about to pour forth on her head, the whole vials of his wrath, in one relentless and unmitigated discharge; but I was already seated opposite to him, and when his eyes rested for a moment on my countenance, a change seemed suddenly to have taken place in the whole character of his emotions. Girzy and her impudence were forgotten, and mournful memories connected with myself, appeared to have become the engrossing subject of his thoughts. A minute or two elapsed, during which the old man did not speak, and Girzy, who was already engaged in decanting a bottle of Madeira at the sideboard, by a somewhat unusual coincidence, did not interrupt the silence, into which the late storm had thus unexpectedly subsided.

Whatever my uncle's feelings might have been, he did not express them. "Cyril," he at length said, "let us ask a blessing;" then

closing his eyes, he again was silent for a few seconds, as if collecting his thoughts for the duty of prayer and thanksgiving. The consequent grace, though long, and somewhat miscellaneous in its petitions, was pronounced in a low and almost inaudible voice, and, at its conclusion, having again adorned his head with its former covering, we commenced our meal.

I leave the pressing cares and hospitable anxieties, with which it was attended on the part of Girzy and my uncle, to be shadowed forth by the imagination of the reader. It passed as such a meal may be supposed to pass, and the departure of the viands was followed in due order of succession, by the introduction of the punch bowl.

To a native of Glasgow, there is, even in the sight of a punch bowl, something of exhilaration and excitement. It brings with it no mournful associations. It is linked to a thousand bright and pleasing remembrances, of youthful and joyous revelry, and of the graver intoxications of maturer years. Within its beautiful and hallowed sphere, are buried no "thoughts that do lie too deep for tears." In

its very name there is delightful music, and it comes o'er his ear

Like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odours!

There was,—or at least I imagined there was,—something of all this discernible in my uncle. He regarded Girzy, with a mollified look, as she placed it on the table, and issued his directions in an accent somewhat softened. In his tone of addressing me, too, there was more of vivacity, than he had yet displayed since our meeting; and that dull heaviness of heart, by which hitherto he had been evidently oppressed, seemed to have become lighter, and at least not utterly overpowering.

The punch was made, and Girzy appeared glass in hand, claiming from her master a bumper “to the health of Maister Ceeral.” The toast, indeed, as drank by the venerable virgin, was somewhat prolix; for, though in part dedicated to its professed purpose, it concluded by an imprecation on those worshippers of Baal, the neerdoweel French landlowpers, who had been the

occasion of my thus returning to my uncle's house the mutilated object she beheld.

Girzy departed, and we were left alone. Then it was, for the first time, that the old gentleman gave expression to that torrent of warm and affectionate feeling, which had hitherto been pent up in his bosom. He was desirous of learning the story, of my not uneventful life. Much of it I told him, but there was much likewise which *he* could not have understood,—which *I* could not tell. In my nature, circumstances had awakened sympathies into strong and terrible action, which in him, during a long life, had lain in torpid slumber, from which they could not now be awakened. In all my physical sufferings, his kind heart was ready to participate; of my mental ones, he knew, and could know nothing.

We did not, however, long enjoy an uninterrupted colloquy. While in the act of detailing to him such portions of my life as I imagined might be most interesting, the door opened, and Girzy came bustling into the apartment, followed by a gentleman of somewhat portly presence, and canonical appearance.

“ Here’s Doctor Balfour come to see you,” exclaimed she, drawing another chair towards the table, and dusting it with her apron as she spoke. “ Come yer ways, Doctor,” she continued, addressing the stranger, who had stopped on finding Mr Spreull was not alone, as he had expected ;—“ there’s naebody wi’ him but Maister Ceeral, and a bonny like sight he’s come hame frae the wars, as ye may see. Waes me ! Little wad the mither that bore him ken him, honest woman ! were she to clap een on him the now. Just come ben, and crook yer legs aneath the mahogany, and tak a preein o’ the bowl.”

My uncle, being seated with his back to the door, and unable to rise from the rheumatism which still affected his limbs, having learned the name and quality of his guest, now added his invitation to that of Girzy, for the worthy Doctor to come forward and be seated. The stranger accordingly advanced, and having shaken hands very cordially with the old gentleman, seated himself without further ceremony in the chair, which Girzy had provided for his accommodation.

Doctor Balfour, (for by such title was the re-

spectable divine distinguished,) was one of the leading members of the High or Calvinistic party of the Scottish Church, and certainly one of the most powerful and energetic preachers of his day. From the period of the French Revolution, deistical principles, or at least a general lukewarmness and indifference to religious observances, had, I think, become more peculiarly endemic in Glasgow than in most places in the kingdom. During my former residence in the city, gentlemen were not much in the habit of frequenting public worship, and the congregations, which were always thin, consisted chiefly of ladies. In such a state of things, to have succeeded in rivetting the attention, and exciting strong religious emotions, in those so little prepared for their reception, was certainly indicative of some power in the preacher. In truth, Dr Balfour was a man of considerable mental energy and shrewdness, and possessed a native though somewhat homely eloquence, which he exerted with much salutary efficacy in his vocation. In the present day, it requires perhaps some courage to preach the stern and uncompromising doctrines of Calvin, without veil-

ing their consequences with somewhat of varnish and disguise. Doctor Balfour, however, did this. He followed the tenets of his founder to their legitimate conclusion, was startled by no difficulties that met him in his path, and would, I believe, have died a martyr at the stake, for the doctrine of supralapsarian election, and irrespective decrees. Perhaps, some such strong and spirit-stirring medicaments were necessary to rouse his hearers, from that state of torpid indifference to religion, into which they had fallen. Certainly something more powerful, than the gentle anodynes hebdomadally poured forth by his weaker brethren, was required to rouse them from the deep sleep, into which their eyelids had been lulled. This, Doctor Balfour provided; and even those, whom mere curiosity had brought together to listen to the preaching of this great cannon of the city, generally returned with less zest than usual, to their Sunday's sheep's-head, and found that on that day the contents of the punch-bowl had lost something of their savour.

Such was the person who formed the unlooked-for, and to me unwelcome addition to our

party. My uncle, I found, had become one of the flock of this zealous pastor, who frequently "dropped in," to administer spiritual consolation to the old gentleman, or to enjoy the exercise of a little theological disputation on questions of polemical divinity. In person, the divine was stout, and somewhat inclining to obesity, and his face was marked by a certain rudeness which bespoke no ascetic abstinence from the good things of the world. His head was covered—certainly not adorned by an unpowdered scratch-wig, which in many places had become threadbare from age, and displayed here and there considerable portions of the Doctor's skull, shining through the net-work from below.

Having shaken hands with my uncle, the reverend gentleman proceeded to compliment him, on the change for the better, which had evidently taken place since his last meeting.

"I was just passing, Mr Spreull," he continued, "and thought I couldna do less than give you a ca', to see how you was getting on in your tough warsle wi' your sair fleshly enemy

the rheumatism. Troth, I didna expect you would have gotten so soon clear of this thraw, I'm really glad to see you so far recovered."

This address elicited a cheerful reply from my uncle, who concluded, by requesting his spiritual comforter to push in his glass, and become a participator in the nectareous contents of the bowl. With this request, the Doctor instantly complied, while his entertainer, in the act of dealing forth with scrupulous exactitude the stated measure of liquor to his guest, thus proceeded:—"Cyril and mysel have already taken a glass or twa frae the bowl, but it will no taste the waur, if you, Doctor, would ask a blessing on this our sober enjoyment of the present mercy."

To the desire thus expressed, a cheerful acquiescence was yielded by his guest, who, closing his eyes, and holding up his right hand, pronounced a long grace, or rather prayer, to which my uncle having again divested himself of his night-cap, listened apparently with reverent attention.

The interruption which this devotional exer-

cise gave to the cheerfulness of the conversation was only temporary. It was no sooner over, than the meeting resumed its former character, and the Doctor proceeded obligingly to congratulate me on my return to my native country, from the dangerous service in which I had recently been engaged. He asked many questions concerning what he termed "the idolatry of the poor benighted race," in whose land I had been a sojourner, and when I spoke of the splendour of the Catholic ritual, its penances and absolutions, its magnificent altars and altar-pieces, its images and gorgeous processions, he expressed infinite astonishment at the details of such heathenish proceedings, and turning to my uncle, "Surely, Mr Spreull," he said, "we canna be thankfu' enough to divine Providence, that has cast our lot in a land in which the pure waters of the gospel trickle, though maybe but in a sma' stream, rather than in one where the folk get naething to drink but the puddles o' corruption that come frae the dirty jawholes o' idolatry, the Popish priests."

This sentiment, of course, met with a cordial

concurrence from my uncle, and the conversation gradually diverged to such clerical matters, as came more immediately home to the business and bosoms of the interlocutors, than those already mentioned. There was much discourse anent Presbyteries and Synods, and Elders, and Overtures to the General Assembly, and parochial occurrences, which were considerably beyond my fathom to understand. The dialogue, however, was interrupted by the entrance of Girzy and Meg, the former of whom advanced to the table, and placing before the divine a large quarto Bible and Psalm Book, again retreated towards the sideboard, where she took possession of a chair, near that which Meg already occupied, as if waiting for the commencement of family worship.

The Doctor having adjusted his spectacles, began by reading a chapter of the Bible, at the conclusion of which, the whole party, with the exception of my uncle, stood up during the delivery of an extemporé prayer, of at least half an hour's duration, in several of the petitions of which, the present circumstances of the

family were specially noticed, and thanksgiving duly offered in their name, for my safe return from the idolatrous country of the Cushites, and the Amorites, and the Gergashites, to the land in which the God of Judah was worshipped in purity and peace.

Both in the substance of the prayer itself, and in its singularity of style and delivery, I found something moving and impressive. In my uncle's countenance there was every external demonstration of sincere devotion. He sat with closed eyes and clasped hands, and at those petitions of the prayer, which came particularly home to his own bosom and condition, he bent his head downwards towards the table, in token of his deep and fervent participation in the supplication thus put up on his behalf to the throne of Divine Grace. Had a stranger entered the apartment at that moment, he might at first, perhaps, have found something ludicrous in the appearance of the party; and it must be confessed that the unfinished punch-bowl on the table, surrounded by the other instruments of carousal, did not exactly harmonize in the imagination with the devotional exercises in which

they were engaged. But all ludicrous associations, I think, must have speedily subsided, and in the energetic words of the pastor,—in the spirit of humble and pious supplication, legible in the look and manner of the aged and infirm old man—perhaps even in my own melancholy countenance, and mutilated form, he might have found matter for other thoughts, and he that came to scoff, might have remained to pray.

But the solemnity of the worship certainly ceased with the prayer. In the psalm which succeeded it, it was with difficulty that even I could prevent the indulgence of a smile. Girzy, who apparently had some taste, if not talent, for music, enacted the part of precentor to the household, and led the tune in a voice, to say the least of it, not remarkably melodious. My uncle joined in this, with apparently as much sincerity and fervour, as he had done in the preceding part of the service, sending forth with the full force of his lungs, a stentorian cacophony, which certainly left Girzy no cause of apology, for the vociferous discordance of her

psalmody. The Doctor sung well, and evidently did his best to reduce the discord of the party into something bearing at least a faint and distant resemblance to music. In this, it is almost needless to say, he was eminently unsuccessful. Had Mozart or Rossini been present, neither could have gone alive from the apartment. Physic could not have saved them—they must have died on the spot.

For myself, having an ear by no means remarkably sensitive, I did not suffer any material inconvenience from the prevailing want of harmony; but my constitutional gravity did suffer some involuntary derangement by the interjections in which Girzy, during the intervals of the tune, deemed it necessary to address her fellow servant. Of the tenor of these, the following specimen may give the reader some idea:—“Ye’re ower heigh, Meg.”—“What for do ye skirl that gate—hae ye nae lug for the tune?”—“No sae loud, ye limmer.”—“Mak less sough wi’ yer skreighin.”—“Haud yer timmer-tuned thrapple.” From the moment these sentences reached my ear, I confess, I found it

impossible again to join my voice in the exercise of praise.

At the conclusion of the psalm, the worthy Doctor pronounced a benediction on the family, and the servants having retired, the glasses were again replenished, and the conversation proceeded as before. The computation, however, did not extend beyond due limits, and the bowl being finished, Girzy and Meg, bearing the apparatus for tea, again entered the apartment. The former, who possessed but a small share of the national talent for silence, took advantage of the privilege of *entré*, which her occupation afforded her, to address the doctor in a strain of familiarity, at which a dignitary of the English Church would certainly have been somewhat astonished.

“Weel, Doctor, yon was a bonny-like chiel ye got to preach for ye last Sabbath’s afternoon. What ca’ ye *him*, now? Hech, but he was a puir fizzionless stick, as ever I heard in a’ my life.”

Here my uncle imperiously ordered her to be silent, but without effect.

“He’s but a preacher, I ettle,” continued the incorrigible Girzy, “for he had nae bands on; and weel I wat sic a smeddumless tike is no very likely to get a kirk in a hurry. He wasna like yersel, Doctor, and drave nane o’ the dust frae out the cushions o’ the poopit wi’ the true birr o’ the Gospel.”

Girzy would probably have proceeded yet farther with her animadversions, had she not been again interrupted by her master, who, in a tone which showed that his anger was now fairly roused, commanded silence.

“Haud yer peace, ye impudent and misleart limmer that ye are; is that a way to speak o’ ony friend o’ the Doctor’s in my house? Gang but the house immediately, and learn when ye come back to keep a calm sough and a steekit gab.”

“Ye needna set up yer birses at me, Mr Spreull,” rejoined Girzy; “for the Doctor kens weel enough I meant nae offence; and gin a’s true that’s said, waur folk hae preach’t for him afore now; for it’s weel kent in th town that

The dell gat power,
For half an hour,
To preach in the poopit o' Rab Balfour ;
But soon the gospel began to fall,
And the elders pookit him oot by the tail.

And had that windlestrae creatur that preached last Sunday been sairt as he deserved——”

Here my uncle became too irate for further sufferance, and reaching out his staff, aimed a blow at his attendant across the portly person of the divine, which fortunately prevented it from taking effect; and Girzy, finding matters had put on so serious an aspect, prudently retired, without affording any further cause of provocation.

The Doctor, who had felt something of the weight of the blow which had been intended by my uncle for his contumacious handmaiden, deemed this a suitable occasion for a little ghostly remonstrance on the subject of those ungodly fits of passion to which the old gentleman was constitutionally subject.

“There’s nae doubt, Mr Spreull,” observed he, “that Girzy has maybe gotten somewhat mair of the gift of the gab than might just hae been desired; but ye ken she’s a clever, ma-

nagin', and faithfu' servant, and her extraordinary gift of speech was likely ordained by Providence to afford you occasion for the exercise of Christian patience; a virtue, Mr Spreull, ye'll excuse my freedom in telling you, wi' which you are no overly stocked. I was really quite sorry to see you so wrathfu' and put out wi' her rampagious tongue, instead of just letting her words gang in at the tae lug, and out at the tither, like a wise man, as the world kens you to be. Tak my word for't, had ye been married, ye would afore this time o' day hae learned to bear better wi' the clatter o' a woman's gab."

"It's very true what you observe, Doctor," meekly answered my uncle; "and I ken weel I'm to blame; but the sound o' her voice just gaes through me like a knife, and it's no to tell what I hae suffered for the last three-and-thirty years frae the tongue o' that woman. Yet, as you say, Doctor, it ought to be mair patiently tholed, as an ordinance—though it's a sair yin—o' divine Providence intended for my edification."

At length the divine took his departure, and afraid of the effects which the unusual excite-

ments and exertions of the day might produce on the enfeebled health of my uncle, I, too, soon intimated my intention of returning for the night to my quarters in the Buck's Head. Though this proposal met with vehement and indignant opposition, I was so well aware that fixing my abode beneath the roof of my uncle would necessarily involve the complete sacrifice of my own privacy and comfort, without proportionally contributing to his, that, in spite of all opposition, I remained resolutely fixed in my determination.

"Isna this bonny-like behaviour, Maister Ceeral," exclaimed the irate Girzy, "no to sleep in yer ain uncle's hoose, when ye've come sae far to see him? There I've had yer sheets hanging a' day by the fire, and I've gart Meg sleep in the bed for the last fortnight to keep it weel aired for you; and after a', to think o' you gaun awa' stravaigin' at this time o' night, to waste yer siller at an inn—Yin wad hae expectit better things frae you, Maister Ceeral, than the like o' that."

I had never before observed in my uncle any symptom of approbation of the eloquence of his

loquacious functionary ; but on the present occasion, he evidently listened to her strenuous endeavours to revolutionize my intentions, with complacency and satisfaction. He had sufficient tact, however, soon to discover that I was obstinately bent on adhering to my plan of returning to the inn ; and addressing Girzy, under whose troublesome though kind importunities I was still suffering,—“Weel, weel,” he said, “it’s nae use plaguing him ony mair about the matter ; ye ken he has some o’ the blood o’ the Spreulls in him, and likes as weel as ony o’ us to hae his ain way ; and after a’, it’s maybe but reasonable he should ; sae clap a bung in yer gab, and hae done at yince wi’ yer deavin.”

Even when the main point of my return to the inn had been carried, some difficulties still arose with regard to the mode in which it was to be effected. I proposed walking.

“Atweel, ye’ll no walk the night, without Mr Spreull’s big-coat ; but ye had better let Meg rin for a noddie,” exclaimed Girzy.

And with this latter request, in order to avoid a repetition of the penance I had endured

on a former occasion, I thought it more prudent to acquiesce.

Shortly afterwards, the noddy was reported to be in waiting for my conveyance, and having faithfully promised an early visit on the following morning, I wished the worthy couple good night.

CHAPTER XV.

——Thou old and true Menenius,
Thy tears are saltier than a younger man's,
And venomous to thine eyes.

Coriolanus.

FROM the details,—given, I fear, with somewhat too much prolixity,—in the preceding chapter, the reader will, I imagine, have acquired sufficient insight into the circumstances, and domestic relations of my uncle, at the period of my visit. In appearance, he was considerably changed by the years which had elapsed since my former visit. He was no longer the hale and vigorous old man, my memory depicted him; his frame had suffered much from the inroads of time, as well as of disease, but the stamina of his naturally strong constitution were not yet utterly broken down, and I rejoiced in the hope, that years,—if not of happiness, at least of tranquillity and comfort,—might yet be in store for the kind and warm-hearted old man. In con-

tributing to his recovery, indeed, I believe my presence and society did more than all the medicines of the doctors. After my arrival, his complaints gradually subsided, and leaning on my arm, with the assistance of his staff, he was soon able to repair to that place where merchants most do congregate—the Exchange Coffee-room. There, seated in an arm chair, he every day spent several hours, transacting business with his usual acuteness, or with spectacled nose, poring over the newspapers of the day, or, when interrupted in his occupation, listening for a few moments, with contemptuous gravity, to the political speculations of some communicative Quidnunc.

I generally dined with the old gentleman, and, over a bowl of his favourite beverage, the evenings went by more rapidly and pleasantly than might have been expected from the apparently impassable gulf which utter dissimilarity of age, habits, and pursuits had set between us. But the mornings were my own; these my uncle divided between the counting-house and the Exchange, and my society, at such times, was regarded only as an idle interruption to busi-

ness. The intervals of liberty thus afforded me were gladly welcomed. I took advantage of them, to escape from the smoky atmosphere of the city, and sallied forth into the country to inhale the balmy air of spring—to gladden my eye, wearied by the dismal monotony of the town, with the sight of the bursting blossoms, and my ear with the melodious rejoicings of bird and insect.

Once, and once only, were my steps directed to the College. Effacing and barbarous hands had been at work, since I had last beheld it, and much of that antique grace, which had lingered over and around it was gone. One side of the venerable Gothic quadrangle had been pulled down, and a detestable building, utterly anomalous in point of architecture, now occupied its site. Behind, too, my eye was shocked by the appearance of a large Grecian edifice, erected since my departure, for the reception of the Hunterian Museum. Abstractedly considered, there was little in the building to excite admiration; but, situated as it was, nothing more barbarously discordant with the prevailing character of the place, can well be imagined.

It almost seemed to have dropped from the clouds, and stood staring on the dark and time-honoured masses, by which it was surrounded, as if wondering by what extraordinary chance, it had been thrown into such company. Verily, I thought, as with feelings of regret and disappointment, my eye rested on the confused architectural jumble, by which the remains of venerable antiquity had been defaced,—“Verily, this university *may* be the seat of learning, but too surely it is not the receptacle of taste.”

Occupied with such thoughts, I passed onwards, and entered the once beautiful pleasure grounds, which, in my younger days, had been the scene of healthful recreation, and manly exercise to the students. These, too, had been curtailed and disfigured. Streets now covered the ground, where, beneath the shade of venerable trees, I had wandered, buried in the dreams of young philosophy, or meditating on the prospects of my future life, as they rose bright and unclouded to my ardent imagination. As I beheld the havoc which the *auri sacra fames* had carried, even into these academical retreats,

unpleasant feelings were awakened, and willing to escape from them, I turned hastily, and retraced my steps. As I retrod the courts, they were filled, as of yore, with students, and the loud voice of gaiety and merriment rung from the aged echoes, as it had done in the days of my youth. Since then, years had gone by; many of the excellent and estimable men, to whose instructions I had been indebted, were no more. The flood of generations was rolling on its eternal course, and I, a waif upon its waters, had already been carried far onward to the grave. Once, in these very courts, I had mingled in a crowd of joyous and happy beings, such as I beheld around me. Now I stood unknown and a stranger, my very existence had passed from all hearts and memories, and when I asked the aged Janitor, with whom I had been an especial favourite, if he remembered Cyril Thornton, who about ten years before formed an unit in the youthful throng? he answered in the negative.

"There may haae been sic a yin," he said, "for aught I ken, but I really canna say that I mind anything about him."

My steps did not linger long in the College, and never were they again planted within its precincts.

Though in the external aspect of Glasgow, little change was apparent from the lapse of years, which had intervened since my former visit, yet a great change was certainly observable in the manners and mode of life of its inhabitants. Wealth had evidently increased, and exotic luxuries and fashions had taken root in the soil. At the epoch of my former visit, the city boasted but one carriage; now gay equipages, with servants in gaudy liveries, were to be met with in every street. Formerly a few clumsy and quakerlike buggies, drawn by horses better fitted for the plough than the shafts, might be seen lumbering along, conveying a physician on his rounds, or an elderly gentleman and his wife to their cottage in the suburbs; now vehicles of the smartest and most fashionable description, whether designated in the nomenclature of the day as Dennet, Stanhope, Whiskey, Tilbury, or Drosky, glittered past with almost meteor-like velocity, in all the great avenues of the city. The ideas of the generation, which

had been springing up during my absence, evidently differed widely from those of their fathers, and least of all did they seem disposed to imitate them, in those habits of parsimony and frugality, in which, perhaps, the chief source of their increasing prosperity was to be sought. Several new and elegant streets had sprung up to the westward of the city, and the gayer and more wealthy part of the population had deserted their former small and smoky residences, for the more elegant and commodious mansions which these afforded. Nothing, in short, could be more striking than the almost total revolution, which a few years had effected in the tastes and habits of the community. The spirit of improvement was evidently abroad: There was less of that narrowness of mind with which, young as I was, I had formerly been struck. Their wants and ideas had evidently been enlarged, and of the truth of the axiom, that wealth and civilization are indissolubly connected, Glasgow might be cited as a striking and irrefragable instance.

In other circumstances, perhaps, these changes might have attracted little of my attention. But

separated from the world, as I felt myself to be, during my sojourn with my uncle, I was glad to find in external objects, anything to withdraw my mind, from brooding on its own solitary griefs. On the whole, I think there was something in the entire novelty of scene and objects in which I moved, and by which I was surrounded, favourable to the restoration of my mental tranquillity. The storm of violent emotion, by which the very foundations of life and reason had been shaken to their centre, found there no mournful association, to excite its dormant fury into action. Memory, indeed, was not idle; yet the keenness of the agony it occasioned had been somewhat diminished. The meridian of glowing passion had already subsided into twilight, and the shadows of time and distance had already partially shrouded, the poignant sources of my sorrow.

The morbid sensibility, with which I had at first regarded my personal disfigurement, had now been displaced by sounder and more reasonable thoughts. It was—or at least I imagined it was, more trifling than I had at first supposed. Those whose love I still valued,

loved me not the less for my misfortunes. What then had it cost me? The love of the Lady Mellicent? Oh, no. My calmer judgment told me it could not be. There were other and deeper causes of alienation, of which I could scarcely be unconscious, but on which I wanted courage to reflect.

The impression I might make on the inhabitants of Glasgow, at all events, cost me no uneasiness. I was nothing to them, and they to me were as nothing. I went abroad; I mingled in the crowded assembly of the Exchange; I daily encountered the stare of rude and vulgar men with the most philosophical indifference. I wished not to attract, I cared not to repel. I was as a star moving onward in its own erratic orbit, uninfluenced in its course or its velocity, by the constellations of the surrounding firmament.

One day, in walking the Trongate, I was accosted by a very grave and dignified-looking personage, who had often before attracted my notice, from the singularity of his air and appearance, though unaccompanied by any personal recognition. He was dressed in a suit of sables, wore knee and shoe-buckles of Bristol stones, and walked

the streets with an air of magisterial authority, with one hand buried in the folds of a black satin waistcoat, over which hung a massive gold chain, indicative of his rank as a bailie, and the other flourishing a large bamboo cane with somewhat of the grace of a drum-major. His hair, which was highly powdered, and gathered behind into a pig-tail, was surmounted by a large three-cornered cocked hat, not unlike those worn in field days by Scottish doctors of divinity. The reader will not probably be surprised, that in this imposing personage, I did not at first recognise my old acquaintance Mr Archibald Shortridge. Yet he it was. Since I had seen him at Bath, he had been joined in holy wedlock to Miss Thomasina Spreull, and having returned to his native city, had there become a person of sufficient prominence and consequence to be elected to the honours of the magistracy.

Under a metamorphosis so complete, some seconds elapsed, during which there remained in my mind some lurking doubts as to his identity; but his voice was not to be mistaken, and he had not articulated a sentence, ere hesitation,

though not wonder, was at once banished. In his manner of addressing me, and in the tone of his voice, there was an expression of conscious dignity, which amalgamated harmoniously with his official gravity and importance. Vulgar and unprepossessing he still was, yet by no means so in a degree unsuitable to the character of a Glasgow bailie.

“ Ah, Major, how’s a’ wi’ you ?” exclaimed he, extending at the same time towards me one of his ungloved hands ; “ I heard of your being in town some time ago, but really the official duties of the magistracy—Take a pinch, Major,” producing his snuff-box as he spoke—“ really the official duties of the magistracy have been so weighty lately, that I have never yet been able to snatch a moment to call on you. I met Meg yesterday on the street, who told me you put up at the Buck’s Head ; and you may depend on it, I shall seize the first leisure moment I can command to call upon you.”

I answered merely by an inquiry for the health of Mrs Shortridge and her family.

“Thank you,—Mrs Shortridge is keepin’ pretty well; but I’m sorry to see you in sic a changed condition. I daresay you thought it very odd I should pass you in the street, as I have done several times, without speaking, and I houp ye’ll no attribute it to any pride on my part, for I really did not ken you from that ugly slash on your chowk, which has gien you a thrawn look about the mouth, really far from becoming.”

I assured him in reply, that I had by no means attributed his silence to any such cause, and was in the act of passing on, when he seized me by the coat, and compelled me unwillingly to continue a listener to his conversation.

“And how’s our worthy uncle? We called on him several times lately, but that Girzy always takes care that I never get a sight o’ him. I was glad to hear that he has lately been recoverin’ frae his trouble. Honest man! drap aff when he may—and in the course o’ nature he canna be expected to haud out much langer—he will be a sair loss to a’ his relations, but mair especially to Mrs Shortridge—to say nae thing o’ the town o’ Glasgow, that canna houp

to look on his like again in a hurry. You may tell him what I say, for it will maybe be a consolation to him in his illness to ken he's sae weel loved and respected by us a'."

I here made a second effort to depart, but the Bailie still kept firm hold of my coat, and my intention was defeated.

"And, Major, could ye no induce him, do ye think, to get a decenter housekeeper than that Girzy? She's really no to be trusted, wi' sae much in her power as she has. She seems to me naething better than a randy, and I war-rant a puir account o' things will be gotten at the old man's death. She's taken care to feather her ain nest brawly, I'll be bound. Ye might just drap a hint or twa in the auld man's lug, though not from me, for I would neither be seen to make nor meddle in the matter, but just as if it came from yourself."

I declined the task thus assigned me rather peremptorily and briefly, and bidding the magistrate good morning, we parted, with reiterated assurances on his part, that his first leisure moment should be devoted to calling on me at the Buck's Head.

In a few days the projected visit of the Bailie was carried into effect, and though I took all necessary precautions to prevent his admission, it became, of course, incumbent on me to return the unwelcome civility. The house of the Magistrate, to which my steps were accordingly directed, I found to be situated in a new and elegant street, which had sprung up since my former residence in Glasgow. Every thing in its external appearance gave evidence of an opulent proprietor. My application to the door-bell was not at first attended to, nor were my second and third attempts to attract the notice of the family more fortunate. At length, after waiting about a quarter of an hour, I lost patience and departed; but I had not proceeded farther than a few yards from the door, when I was arrested in my progress by a voice calling after me from the vestibule—"I say, you gentleman, wha was ye wantin'?" and turning round, I observed that the door had been at length opened by a foot-boy, from whom this somewhat free and unceremonious address proceeded. A more complete lout can hardly be conceived. He wore a dirty apron, his stock-

ings, which were of grey worsted, hung down in large folds about his ankles, and his shoes, which betrayed no traces of either brush or blacking, were without latches. Above the dress I have already described, he wore a coat of pea-green livery, with scarlet facings, which had evidently but a moment before been donned for the nonce. Of this hopeful scion of the establishment I inquired for Mrs Shortridge, and being informed she was at home, I was ushered up a splendid stair-case to the drawing-room, which was without fire, and betrayed no sign of recent habitation. The furniture of this apartment was handsome and costly ; yet there was something in the assortment of colours it displayed, glaring and unpleasant to the eye. On one side of the apartment, stood a harp and a piano-forte, and confronting each other, at either end, hung full-length portraits of the master and the mistress of the mansion, displaying all that stiffness of figure and *stairiness* of look, which bad artists generally contrive to infuse into their resemblances.

I had been several minutes in the drawing-room, when a servant entered and requested my

name. The request was complied with, and I was again left to my own solitary meditations.

These were at length broken by the appearance of Mrs Shortridge, who entered the apartment evidently fresh from the toilet, in all the splendour of feathers and gros-de-Naples.

In her air and manner there was, as might have been expected, something more sedate and matronly than in the days of her maidenhood, when her unparalleled agility in dancing had been the admiration, if not the envy, of the fashionable assemblies in Bath.

The reader will perhaps excuse me for not affording him the minute details of a conversation, which consisted chiefly of felicitations on her own change of condition and condolences on mine. I learned that two of her sisters were married since we last met. One to a respectable country curate of the English church, the other to a gigantic kettle-drummer of a regiment of dragoons, with whom she had eloped, to the great grief and scandal of her family.

While still engaged in conversation, a nurse entered, bearing in her arms a little carrot-headed boy, with a snub nose, and a most in-

sufferable squint. The appearance of this heir of the accumulating honours of the Shortridges, of course, diverted our colloquy into the channel most agreeable to the feelings of a mother: I was told the story of all his infantine pranks, and preternatural precocity of talent, and having heard him repeat his letters, and sing a song, of which the tune was somewhat indistinguishable, I did not neglect to take advantage of the earliest opportunity of escape. From the Bailie and his lady I afterwards received several invitations to dinner, but these I declined.

The time now approached, when I was about to quit Glasgow. I hesitated long before I could bring myself to state my intention of departure to my uncle. I knew it would give him pain, and I felt a sort of nervous anxiety to delay the intimation of its necessity as long as possible. I did so; but the moment at length came when it was necessary to speak, and I told him that a few days were destined to be the limit of my stay. While I spoke, the old man listened in silence; but a sigh broke from him as he stretched out his long and bony hand, and grasped

mine, with an intensity of pressure indicative of the warmth of his feelings.

"What you have now tell't me, Cyril," he at length said, "hasna ta'en me by surprise. I kent ye couldna bide here long, wasting the prime o' your days wi' an auld and feckless man, waiting to see him hirple by inches into his grave. O' that fearsome journey, Cyril, I hae little left to gang; for frae what I feel within," here he laid his hand upon his breast, "I ken the spade's already bought, and the mattock in the gravedigger's hand, that's to howk my bed in the kirkyard. Great as the comfort of your presence would be to me in the struggle that is fast approaching, I dinna ask ye to bide, for when the spirit's gane, it matters little by what hand the een may be closed. Yes, gang your ways, Cyril, and though my body's ower auld to move, my spirit will gang with you."

I returned the pressure of his hand, but spoke not. He resumed.

"Cyril, rax down the Bible frae the skelf, and read out a psalm and a chapter. It's good, when the shadowy and fading objects of this world are engrossing ower much of our thoughts

and our affections, to turn them on God—the God whose almighty hand has upheld us in times past—on whose saving grace alone all our hopes for the future can rest for their completion.”

I did as the old man desired, and not with heedless ear did he drink in the words of holy inspiration. They calmed the tremor of his spirit, and he became again tranquil.

I did not tell my uncle the particular day fixed for my departure, for I had not courage to take leave of him. I dreaded too much the effect of strong agitation on his enfeebled frame, not to feel anxious to spare him every pang of which our separation—too probably an eternal one—could be divested. The evening preceding my departure came, and I at length rose to depart. I advanced towards the old man, who, unconscious that he then gazed on me for the last time, stretched forth his hand, and wished me, in a calm and untroubled voice—Good night.

At that moment, the gush of feeling overpowered me, and I wept—I confess it—like a child. His hand was bedewed with my tears,

and surprised at this unexpected ebullition of feeling, he addressed me in an anxious yet a soothing voice.

“Wae’s me, Cyril, your spirits have been low the night, and I fear ye’re no weel. Gang to your bed, and I hope you’ll get a good sleep, and be better the morn.”

“Yes, uncle,” I replied, “I am well, but my spirits are indeed low. Give me your blessing; I shall then feel calmer, and sleep, when it descends on my eyelids, will be more refreshing.”

“My good laddie, the blessing o’ a sinfu’ man like mysel’ is but little worth—yet ye shall hae’t.”

I knelt down before him much moved, and he proceeded:—

“May the blessing of an all-merciful God be ever on you and around you. May his grace be a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your path. May it guide, strengthen, and support you in all the troubles and adversities of this life, and bring you, through faith in our Redeemer, to eternal blessedness in that which is to come. Amen.”

With a sad and softened spirit, did I reve-

verently listen to the affecting benediction which he had poured forth in the fulness of his heart, and I rose not from my knees, without a mental prayer, that grace might descend abundantly on his grey and aged head,—that all his errors and his frailties might be mercifully forgiven,—and that the last days of his earthly pilgrimage might be hallowed by a blessing. No word passed my lips, but pressing the hand of the old man in one last and almost convulsive grasp, I hurried from the apartment.

When I returned to my hotel, I did not retire to rest, but seizing a pen, wrote a letter to my uncle, in which I bade him farewell, and gave utterance to the feelings of affectionate regard with which his kindness had inspired me. On the following morning I quitted Glasgow.

CHAPTER XVI.

When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

Much Ado about Nothing.

If souls guide vows, if vows are sanctimony,
If sanctimony be the gods' delight,
If there be rule in unity itself,
Then this is she.

Troilus and Cressida.

ONCE more my steps were turned southward, and having crossed the border, in a few hours, I found myself in the green and sunny land of my nativity. My sojourn in Scotland had certainly, by abstracting my mind from those objects which might have retarded the restoration of its composure, been favourable to my health. I had regained strength, and my spirits were firmer and less variable, than they had been since my return from abroad.

As I approached Middlethorpe, it was not without some palpitation of the heart, that I reflected on the painful task, which there awaited me. My resolution of again joining the

army remained unshaken, and I was about to bid farewell—an eternal farewell, to Lucy, who had ever regarded me with fond affection, and to Laura, by whom, I knew, that I had, at least, *once* been beloved. I was about to break the last links that bound me to earth: to gaze *once* on the beings to whom my heart still clung with fondness, and then to behold them no more.

Laura Willoughby! How often since we last parted, had her image started up, like a thing of light and life, amid the darkness of my memory! With how many dear associations, tranquil, yet serenely beautiful in their tranquillity, was not her image in my imagination, indissolubly connected! From her fair eyes it was, that my heart had first learned its rudiments of love. It was when breathed from her soft voice, that the spirit of sweet music had first sunk meltingly into my soul. Not from the painter's or the sculptor's art, but from Laura, young, beautiful, and joyous, as I remembered her, had I drawn my first conceptions of female beauty, which time had never afterwards obliterated from my heart and fancy. And yet I had loved another! I had been false and re-

creant to all the finest and the holiest impulses of my nature. Why was this? Why had I suffered my heart to be led astray, from its allegiance to one, on whom, I now felt, it might have rested, and been happy? In which of the ennobling and peculiar attributes of woman, was Laura Willoughby inferior to the highest and the proudest of her sex? Had I not, in forsaking her for another, been misled by ambition? Were all the sufferings I had incurred,—all the torture and the anguish which had brought me to the brink of the grave, more than a just retribution for my offence? She had loved me. I had sacrificed her peace of mind, but had not secured my own. The victims had, indeed, bled, but the demon had not been propitiated.

What a multitude of tender sympathies and affections, lingered over and around her! Often did I think of her bathed in tears, as at the moment of our parting, when, with marble cheek and closed eyes, she stood before me, and I knew only by the tremulous motion of her lips, that she strove, though in vain, to pronounce the word Farewell. Oh, that in my happier days, I had made her the object of my

love! But alas, I thought, it is now too late. Could I now offer her—would she stoop to receive, the homage of a heart, which had already been rejected by another? Could I, who in my days of prime had worshipped at another shrine, —could I now, maimed and broken down, widowed in heart, and bankrupt in affection, presume to speak of love to Laura Willoughby? Could I, indeed, love at all? Was my heart not seared and callous? Had my feelings towards Lady Melicent been changed? I knew not; she was still to me an object of emotion; yet pride mingled with my pain, when I thought of those days of almost more than mortal beatitude, in which I had won and worn the high guerdon of her love. I had suffered; I had been miserable; I was still unhappy. There was poison mixed with the intoxicating contents of the goblet, and I had drained it to the dregs. Fortune had done her worst. Physical and mental anguish had wrung my body and my soul. Yet fortune could alone influence the present and the future,—it could not obliterate the past.

Of such a character were the confused and

multitudinous thoughts that stirred, and were stirring within me when I reached Middlethorpe. It was night. The carriage had been rolling on for several hours amid the darkness, before I was awakened from my reveries, by the sudden stopping of the vehicle. In a moment I had sprung into the hall, and rushed onward unannounced into the drawing-room. The family were assembled there, and I appeared suddenly in the midst of them an unexpected guest.

I leave my reception to the imagination of the reader. Let it shadow forth for him all that is warm, kind, and affectionate, and he will not exceed the truth. Lucy had recovered her looks since my departure. Never on maiden's cheek was seen a richer bloom, never did maiden's eyes dart brighter effulgence, than Lucy's as she gazed once more upon her brother. It was not so with Laura. She was paler and thinner than I had ever seen her. Sadness was on her brow, which the smile of her colourless lips could not obscure from observation. No joyful light came dancing from her eye, and in the expression of her counte-

nance, there was an indefinable something that told of secret suffering and sorrow. Laura was not now, as I remembered her ; yet no ray of loveliness that had lingered round her was gone. The character of her beauty was indeed changed, but it was beauty still.

My heart smote me as I gazed on her, for I entertained a vague consciousness, that but for me, she had been happy.

When I inquired anxiously about her health, she answered she was well, yet I learned from Lady Willoughby and Lucy, that, from some withering impulse, for which medicine afforded no cure, they saw her, with deep anxiety and alarm, gradually fading.

During my stay at Middlethorpe, Laura, in such sad circumstances, was the engrossing object of my cares and anxieties. In her presence, all sadness was banished from my brow ; I endeavoured to raise her spirits by a forced elevation of my own. The effort was seldom successful, and yet I believe a melancholy and dreamy happiness—a calm, not bright, but untroubled—a waveless stillness of all painful emotion—a soothing and tranquil quiescence of

heart and mind frequently stole over her in my society.

The week which I intended to pass at Middlethorpe carried with it much of sadness of spirit; for it was felt by all to be the prelude of a parting, and that parting—an eternal one. In the course of it, Frank Willoughby, who had been in town, on my arrival, came to accompany me to the place of embarkation, and bid me farewell. The week soon passed, and I was still at Middlethorpe. When I talked of departure, Lucy, with streaming eyes, would throw her arms about my neck, and implore me not to leave England in the feeble and precarious state to which I had been reduced, and call on Laura to join in her entreaties. Laura was silent, yet raised her eyes on me, with a look of pity and of kindness, which spoke more than words could have conveyed. But my resolution was taken, and I would not be moved.

“Nay, Lucy,” I answered, “why should I remain in a country, in which life has lost for me all charm. In the excitements of the field, I may yet find something to stir my sluggish

spirit into action ; and if I die—alas, what loss do I create to any one but you ?”

Laura bent down, and hid her face as I spoke, that I might not read her emotion.

Though my determination was unshaken, it was difficult to be carried into effect. Lucy, in the fulness of her heart, would beg but for a single day, and could I refuse her ? No. Yet this could not last for ever, and delay it as I might, I knew that the moment of the final struggle must come at last.

At length it came. I had made my arrangements unknown to any of the family, and the carriage was at the door, before I had announced my intention. Then I sought Laura, for with her, I felt it necessary to my happiness, to have a short interview before my departure, to tell her, on the eve of an eternal separation, that I did not part from her in cold indifference of heart. She was not in the house. I learned she had gone out an hour or two before, and had not yet returned. I went forth into the park in search of her, I visited her favourite walk, beneath the spreading arms of the gigantic beeches, and I called

aloud upon her name, but received no answer. Then I sought her in her flower garden, but that had long been neglected, and she was not there. I remembered her favourite bower, on the banks of a shady dell, in which she delighted to seek retirement, when the sun was high. This bower was peculiarly her own, and here, even by her own family, her solitude was held sacred from intrusion. Thither my steps were bent. As I approached, no sound was heard but the murmuring of the brook beneath, and the carolling of the birds from the branches of the leafy wilderness, in which it stood embowered. When I came within a few yards I stopped, unwilling to intrude suddenly on her privacy, and in a low, but audible voice, I pronounced her name. No answer was returned, and uncertain whether it contained the object of my search, I at length approached the door.

When I entered, she was seated at a rustic table, with her face buried in her hands. A bunch of wild flowers was before her, and a book lay open upon the table. She did not move on my entrance, and I again addressed her.

"Laura," I said, "I am come to bid you farewell."

She raised her head quickly and suddenly, as if surprised by my presence. She rose as she beheld me.

"You are going," she said, and extending her hand towards me, she sunk back upon her seat, as if exhausted by the effort. Her face was pale as death, and her eyes in a moment became lustreless and glassy.

"Oh, Laura, you are ill; excuse me for having thus intruded on your privacy, but I felt I could not depart without seeing you once more."

I saw she was struggling to speak, but could not, for her lips moved, yet they produced no sound. At length the word farewell, in deep and suffocating tones, was faltered from her lips.

"Ere I bid you farewell, Laura, I have something to say, which I could not be happy were I to leave unspoken. I would not have you believe me unkind—ungrateful. Alas, could you read my heart, you would know, I am neither."

As I spoke I seated myself beside her on the mossy bench—her head fell upon my shoulder, and in a few minutes the power of utterance was restored to her lips.

What passed at that interview, words shall never tell.

The carriage was countermanded. I did not return to the army.

CHAPTER XVII.

Whither is he vanish'd ?
Into the air, and what seem'd corporal
Melted as breath into the wind.

Macbeth.

But where is he, the pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past ?
Methinks he cometh late, and tarries long.
He is no more. These breathings are his last.
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself is nothing.

Childe Harold.

ONCE again, in spite of all my sufferings, my mind was happy and at rest. The man who says, "I will sorrow, and will not be comforted," is ignorant of the laws of his own nature,—he knows not that which is within him. He cannot dedicate his days to unavailing regrets. Comfort will visit him in a thousand unknown shapes, and unsuspected forms. Sometimes it will steal unawares into his soul, and, brooding like the Halcyon on the billowy waters of his spirit, they will become calm. Sometimes, like

a thing of life and beauty, it will start up before him in his path, and he will welcome it to his arms. If joy is transient, so is sorrow. The chariot of Time, though its wheels be noiseless, is ever rolling onward in its course. The world may remain unmoved, but *to us* it is ever changing. The mountain, which in the morning, hid half the firmament from the eye of the mariner, when seen at eventide from the deck of his receding vessel, seems to have shrunk into a molehill.

Hitherto, gentle reader, I have made you the depositary of my confidence. I have laid bare to your view my actions and my motives. You know my errors—I have told you the secrets of my life. These were my own, I had a right to reveal them, and I have done so. The time has at length come—I write it with regret—when this confidence must cease. I married; and from the moment I did so, the secrets of another became indissolubly connected with my own. A barrier has sprung up between us, which cannot be overpassed. I would not deceive you; thenceforward the workings of my

bosom can be known but to God, and one only of his creatures.

Yet, separated as we are ever destined to be, I would willingly indulge the hope that there are some kind natures at least, who are not utterly indifferent to the future fate of one, whose career through infancy and in manhood they have already followed. To such—if such there be, the few and brief particulars I have yet to relate may not be without interest.

In a few months from the period referred to in the last chapter, bloom had again visited the cheek of Laura Willoughby, and she became my wife. Never, perhaps, was there a more complete and sudden revolution in a human heart, than the conviction that I was still to one fair being, the object of fervent and devoted love, created in mine. The discordant jarring of its elements was in a moment hushed, and the chords of my spirit, when moved by her gentle breathing, gave forth symphonious music. I was happy, but my happiness was of a different nature from any I had before conceived of. It was in nothing like the glorious swing of rapture, which in former days had thrilled every

fibre of my frame, and shot like wild-fire through my veins. Yet it was better than that, deeper, less troubled, more serene, less variable, and more enduring.

After my marriage, I wished not again to mingle in the world. I had already experienced my share of its vanities, its dangers and its disappointments. The full capacity of my affections was filled at home, and what need was there that I should seek enjoyment abroad. I quitted the army, and retired to Thornhill. Twelve tranquil and happy years have since passed, during which I have found no reason to doubt the wisdom of my resolution. My life, indeed, has not been one of idleness ; and, I trust, that in discharging the duties of my station with zeal and fidelity, I have not served my country less effectually than I could have done in the more active services of a military life.

At first, Thornhill was to me the source of many painful remembrances. Every object I beheld there, was linked with sad associations of those whom I had loved, and who were gone for ever. Every spot of the ground—almost

every tree was connected with the memory of youthful days, and stirred my heart with melancholy thoughts. This, however, by degrees wore off. The associations, indeed, still continue, but the pangs which they excited are gone. My regrets have been softened, not de-racinated by time. Of those I have committed to the grave, I now think with tender memory—not with poignant sorrow.

There is a healing medicament in nature for minds that delight to dwell too fondly on the past. When I gaze on my children, the sources of a thousand fears and hopes, my thoughts are either fixed on the present, or projected to the future. Yet how frequently, do even these awaken the sleeping remembrances of my youthful days. The sunny hair, and blue eyes of Charles, recall the brother of my youth whose name he bears, and Laura—little Laura—is she not the image of that Lucy, who came dancing in the glee of her childhood to welcome the return of her brothers to their home? Yes, in her sylph-like form, in her dark and laughing eyes—even in that nasal tendency to *snub*, which time has so happily removed from Lucy, the re-

semblance is perfect. But I would turn from circumstances exclusively connected with myself, to others in which the reader may perhaps take deeper interest.

From the period of my quitting Glasgow, the infirmities of my uncle continued to increase. I wrote him of my marriage, and received a letter of kind congratulation in return. I entreated him to quit Glasgow, and make Thornhill his future residence ; but the old man felt and knew that the habits of a long life were not thus to be broken by a sudden wrench. Business, which had been the labour of his early life, was become the pleasure of his later days. He was sensible, he said, of the kindness of the motive which prompted the invitation, but he would not lay on me the burden of a querulous and infirm old man. He was too old a tree to be transplanted ; he would die where he had lived, and lay his bones with his father's. He survived about five years, during which period I paid him several visits.

At length, a letter came from Girzy, informing me that he was very ill, and the physicians despaired of his recovery. In half an

hour I was on the road, and travelled day and night, in the hope that I might yet be in time to close his eyes. I thank God I was so. He was dying when I arrived; yet when Girzy told him of my presence, in a voice which sobbing rendered almost inarticulate, he gazed on me with a look of kindness, and I felt the pressure of the hand I held in mine. His death was easy. No one knew at what moment his spirit had departed. He appeared to sink into a slumber, from which he never woke. May we not believe of this kind and generous old man, that, dying in the sincerity of his faith, "he fell asleep in the Lord."

At another moment, I might have laughed at the expression of the countenances of the numerous relations who were present at the opening of the will. Never perhaps was hope, and fears that kindle hope, more variously and ludicrously depicted, than on the faces of those who listened with breathless anxiety, to each succeeding bequest of the important document, when read aloud by the slow and drawling voice of the solicitor. By this it appeared, that the old gentleman had left legacies to each of

his brother's children, but the bulk of his large fortune, including the estate of Balmalloch, to me. By this large accession I have been enabled to purchase back all that portion of my ancestral estates, which, from the extravagance of my grandfather, it had been found necessary to sell. Thus have the shorn honours of the family been unexpectedly restored.

To his old and faithful domestic, my uncle bequeathed an annuity of a hundred a-year—to her, wealth as great as the mines of Potosi. Yet long was the kind and faithful creature inconsolable for the death of her master. She did not cry, but she wandered up and down the house, in a vague but sad consciousness that, like Othello, her occupation was gone. Often would she start up from her chair in the kitchen, in forgetfulness of the sad event, and run towards the chamber in which the body was laid, anxious to administer to the wants of him, who could feel human wants no more. Thus did her time pass till the day of the funeral, but when she saw the mournful assemblage, and the coffin, that contained the remains of one, who for forty years had been the engross-

ing object of all her ministering cares, carried forth to be committed to its last home, the poor creature seemed utterly broken-hearted and bent down by the weight of her affliction.

I accompanied the funeral into Dumbartonshire, and laid the old man by the side of his brother.

On my return, I did what I could to comfort Girzy and soothe the violence of her grief. Her relations I found were all dead, and there was no tie, since the departure of her master, that bound her to Scotland. So Girzy went with me to Thornhill, where she has remained ever since.

Knowing the natural activity of her constitution, and her aversion to quiescence, I at first endeavoured to find scope for her energies, by placing her in a situation of authority. The English servants and the Scotch housekeeper, however, did not agree. The flames of civil war broke out in the establishment, and all was discord and confusion. Girzy, who carried her zeal for my interest, a point or two further than was desirable, came to me with loud complaints

of the waste and the extravagance of my domestics.

“Thae wasterfu deevils o’ servants, Maister Ceeral,” she would say in the fullness of her heart, “will eat you out o’ house and hame. It just drives me demented to see the galravichin that’s gaun on at a’ hoors in the servants’ ha’, to say naething o’ the loupin and rampagin o’ thae neerdoweel cutties, wi’ the bardy flunkies, that are nae better than themsells. I’s e warrant we’ll hae some o’ them sittin’ in the kirk, on the black stool, afore lang. And then they maun hae meat three times a-day, and the strong beer gangs ower their thrapples like sae muckle water; set the like o’ them up, indeed, wi’ their yill and roasted meat! This very morning, when I made a haill pat-fu’ o’ parritch mysel’, and set it afore them for their breakfast, wad they sae muckle as look at it? Na, they turned up their noses at the very sight o’t, and tell’t me to tak my Scotch dishes to the pigs! Heard ever leevin woman the like o’ that? But I’s e bring down their proud stomachs, and gar them pike their banes better, before a’s done, or my name’s no Girzy Black.”

In short, Girzy seemed determined to set up as the Joseph Hume of the establishment, and her labours met with pretty much the same reception, with those of that distinguished economist. The servants came in a body, and declared they could no longer remain in office under that Scotch skinflint of a housekeeper. Resignation was the order of the day. I was briefly, but decidedly, informed, that I must either seek a new housekeeper, or a new establishment of servants. The steward talked of resigning the seals, and the house-maid of laying her mop at my feet ; the butler would not draw a cork without a change of ministry, the groom gave up his curry-comb, and even a Flibbertigibbet of an errand boy, hesitated on the propriety of carry my letters to the post, without an immediate prospect of a satisfactory adjustment. Under such appalling circumstances, I was compelled to yield. Girzy was transferred to the nursery, where she reigns with undisputed authority, teaching the children to speak Scotch, and spoiling them by over indulgence.

From Lucy, now Lady Willoughby, I scarcely consider myself separated. Middlethorpe is

not beyond the limits of a morning's ride, and the intercourse between the families is cordial and constant. Frank has become almost as domestic as myself, and makes an excellent husband. Time has deprived Lucy of none of her attractions. She is neither less gay nor high-spirited than formerly, though, with respect to all the duties of a wife and mother, I confess I do not know a more exemplary matron. Frank's companions sometimes joke him, indeed, on the change of his taste and habits, which has become apparent since his marriage, and I have remarked that he is generally silent in conversation, when allusion is made to the domestic circumstances of families, in which the grey mare is known to be the better horse.

The society of Conyers, now a K.C.B., with about a dozen foreign orders dangling from his button-hole, I also frequently enjoy. He married Miss Culpepper, a young lady to whom I have had the honour of introducing the reader in the course of these Memoirs, but with whose good qualities I enjoyed no opportunity of becoming acquainted. By the death of her bro-

ther, who died from bolting ice when heated by dancing at a ball, she succeeded to the estate of Culpepper Park, which Conyers now possesses in right of his wife. Age has somewhat moderated the extreme vivacity of his spirits, but by no means diminished his attachment to old friends, and our regard, begun in youth, is likely, if I may judge from my own feelings, to continue unbroken till death. Sir Charles and Lady Conyers are the gayest people in the county. No one rides better horses, or is a keener sportsman, than my old friend; no one drives a smarter equipage, or gives more splendid parties, than her Ladyship. We are but sober people at Thornhill, yet Conyers always spends a fortnight with us about Christmas, a visit to which we make a regular return.

William Lumley went some years ago to India as a Judge. He writes me, he is there engaged in a ponderous book on Indian Antiquities, with which he means to astonish the learned on his return to Europe.

Lady Lyndhurst (I really beg pardon of the Lord Chancellor, but mine is the older crea-

tion) continues to fill that prominent station in the world of *haut ton*, to which by her rank, beauty, and talents she is so eminently entitled. Since my marriage we have twice met, and she received me with the cordial welcome of an old friend. Though I have never ceased to feel a deep interest in her happiness, these meetings were not the cause of any very painful or violent emotions. The season of these has passed away, and when I gaze on Laura and my children, I can bend in grateful acquiescence to the decrees of Providence, and say, from the bottom of my heart, "It is better as it is."

READER, it is time that the drama of my life should close. The curtain must now fall, and the puppets, which for your amusement have strutted their little hour upon the stage, are about to vanish for ever from your view. If, in following the vicissitudes of my career, you have occasionally felt sympathy for my joys or suf-

ferings, accept my thanks; and should your early days, like mine, have been overcast with storms, may these too pass away, and leave the sunset of your life serene and unclouded as that of

CYRIL THORNTON.

FINIS.

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